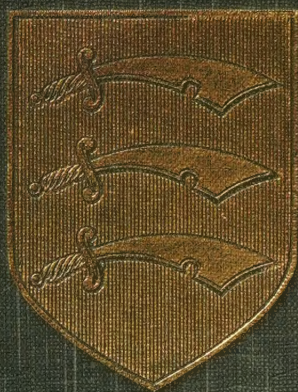
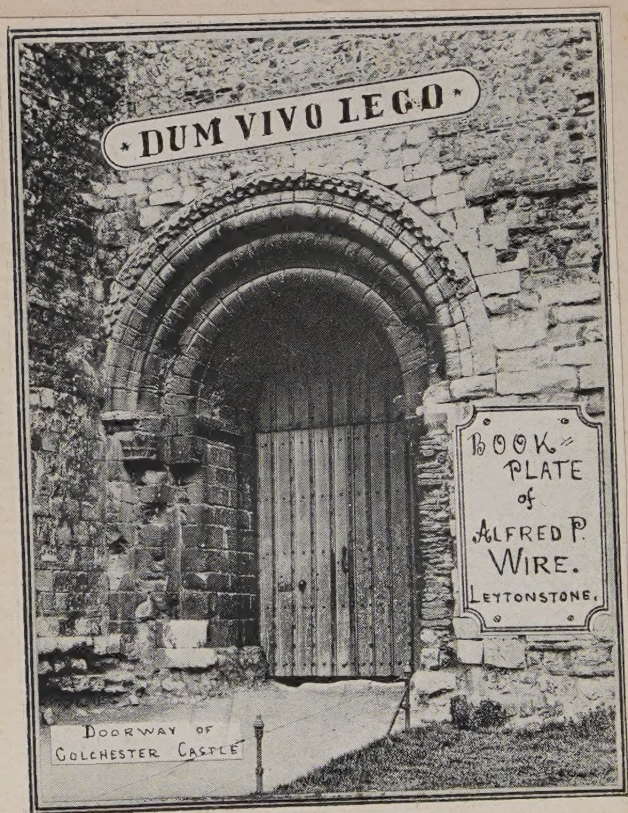


THE
CATHEDRAL CHURCH
AND
SEE OF ESSEX



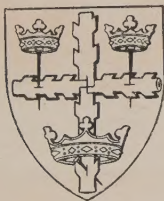
REV. J. CHARLES COX LL.D., F.S.A.



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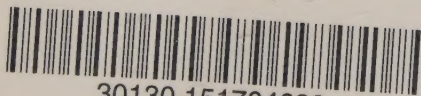
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THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH
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THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH AND SEE OF ESSEX

BY THE

REV. J. CHARLES COX, LL.D., F.S.A.

AUTHOR OF

'CHURCHES OF DERBYSHIRE' (4 VOLS.), 'HISTORY OF CANTERBURY,' 'ENGLISH
CHURCH FURNITURE,' ETC.; AND OF ECCLESIASTICAL ARTICLES IN THE
'VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORIES' OF ESSEX, NORFOLK, SUFFOLK,
HANTS, ETC.

WITH THIRTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS
AND TWO PLANS

LONDON
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AND DERBY

1908

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TO
HENRY LAVER, M.R.C.S., F.S.A.,
President of the Essex Archæological Society,

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED AS A SMALL TOKEN OF
FRIENDSHIP, AND OF APPRECIATION OF THE
SERVICES HE HAS RENDERED TO GENERAL
ARCHÆOLOGY IN ESSEX AND
ELSEWHERE.

PREFACE

THERE has not hitherto been any history or description of the highly interesting parish church of Chelmsford, long or short, except that which has been given by Mr. Chancellor in valuable papers contributed at different times to the Proceedings of the Essex Archæological Society ; but these have only obtained a limited circulation among the members of that excellent association. As soon as it had been finally settled, on March 5, 1908, that the church of the Blessed Virgin at Chelmsford was to be the cathedral church of the new diocese, whose limits were to be identical with those of the county, several of my Essex friends asked me to undertake a short history of the old parish church of the county town, knowing that I had described several of the more important Essex churches in the pages of the *Builder* and elsewhere.

As I had given a good deal of attention to the ecclesiastical history of the kingdom of the East Saxons when writing a treatise on that subject (in conjunction with Dr. J. H. Round) for the second volume of the *Victoria County History of Essex*, and had some acquaintance with the episcopal registers of London and the archidiaconal papers at Chelmsford, it seemed to me that it might be useful to include in this small and unpretentious book an outline account of the founding of Christianity in

these parts in the seventh century, and of its future development.

The decision has not yet been taken as to the name by which the new diocese is to be known. To some it seems unprecedented and contrary to general ecclesiastical usage that the see should be called by any other term than that of the cathedral or seat town, and there is certainly much to be urged in favour of Chelmsford. Contrariwise, there is something more definite and more generally acceptable to not a few in adopting the style of the See or Bishopric of Essex. Moreover, the objection that might validly be urged against a see of Hertfordshire, of Berkshire, or the like, is not applicable to a title like Essex. In short, if such a title is adopted it will have the very highest precedent, and take us back to the early days of the reconversion of England, when the pagan hordes of Saxons and others were converted to the Faith. Dioceses in those days were coterminous with kingdoms or principalities, and there were thus Bishops of Northumbria, of Mercia, of Wessex, and most assuredly of Essex. St. Cedd is distinctly termed, by the Venerable Bede, Bishop of the East Saxons—that is, of Essex.

With regard to obligations, I desire to express my particular indebtedness to Mr. Chancellor, to whom Chelmsford owes so much, not only for information gleaned from his papers, but also for other facts imparted *viva voce*, and still more for his kindness in supplying a ground-plan of the cathedral church. It is also a pleasure to thank Miss Olive M. Landon and Miss Hilda M. Landon for photographing the terra-cotta font, for taking rubbings of the quaint Rudd monument, and for careful collation of monumental inscriptions. My thanks are also due to the rector, the Rev. Canon Lake, for facilities for consulting the old church-

wardens' accounts and the parish registers. The outline map of the old deaneries of Essex, showing the three archidiaconal jurisdictions, has been copied, by special and courteous permission, from a map, giving fuller information, that recently appeared in the second volume of the *History of Essex*, as put forth by the Victoria County History Syndicate.

For some reasons it might have been better to have delayed the issue of this little book until the exact title of the new see had been settled. But the publishers and several of my ecclesiastical friends felt strongly that it would be well to put forth some particular information as to the last new diocese of the great Anglican Communion on the eve of the gathering of the vastly-important and momentous Pan-Anglican Congress ; for the formation of a see to embrace the area of the county of Essex is the latest visible expression of the vitality and energy of the Mother Church of England.

J. CHARLES COX.

Rogation Tide, 1908.

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THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH

AND

SEE OF ESSEX

THE SEE OF ESSEX.

THERE can be no manner of doubt that Christianity must have had a considerable hold over the district afterwards known as Essex during the latter part of the prolonged Roman occupation ; but it is hardly probable that any reliable evidence will be ever brought to light with regard to the religious history of that period. Of the numerous legendary metropolitans of London belonging to the British Church, Bishop Stubbs and Bishop Browne agree that there are only two that can claim historic recognition—viz., Restitutus, who attended the Council of Arles, in the year 314, and Fastidius, who was a bishop of Britain in 431.

After the coming of St. Augustine firmer ground is reached. St. Augustine, in 604, appointed Mellitus to the bishopric of London, and to preach the Gospel to the pagans of the kingdom of the East Saxons. The King of the East Saxons at that date was Sabert, a nephew of Ethelbert of Kent, who had embraced the faith ; but on Sabert's death, his pagan sons drove forth Mellitus, who escaped for a season to France. When the sons of Sabert were killed in battle with the West Saxons in 616, Mellitus endeavoured to return to London, as the capital of Essex and the seat of his diocese ; but the men of Essex, persisting in their idolatry, resisted his endeavours, and the bishop repaired to Canterbury, where, in 619, he succeeded Laurentius as archbishop.

For many years the kingdom of Essex remained pagan, but at length, in 653, Christianity was for the second time planted in their midst. Sigebert the Good was then chief or king of this principality; he was a friend of Oswig, King of Northumbria, who was in the habit, as Bede tells us in detail, of arguing with him about his religion. Eventually the true faith prevailed with Sigebert, and several of his friends and attendants. They were baptized by Bishop Finan of Lindisfarne, at the royal residence called At-the-Wall, because "it is close by the wall with which the Romans formerly divided the island of Britain, at a distance of twelve miles from the eastern sea."

Sigebert, as Bede expresses it, "having now become a citizen of the eternal kingdom, returned to the seat of his temporal kingdom," and begged Oswig to send him Christian teachers. In accordance with this wish, Cedd, the brother of St. Chad, was recalled from his work in Mercia, and sent, with another priest for his companion, to preach and baptize in Essex. The work of these two missionaries, as they travelled throughout the small kingdom of the East Saxons in all directions, met with much success, and many of the residents were converted and baptized. Cedd, on his return to Lindisfarne to report as to their success, was consecrated bishop of the Church of the East Saxons by Bishop Finan, who called to him two other bishops to assist at the ordination. After his consecration Cedd returned to his province and pursued the good work with increased energy and ample authority, ordaining priests and deacons to assist him, and building churches in several places. In the detailed account given by Bede of Cedd's evangelistic work no mention is made of London, and it seems probable that he was not permitted to enter that city. London was at that time, to use the words of Freeman, "fluctuating between the condition of an independent commonwealth and that of a dependency of the Mercian kings."

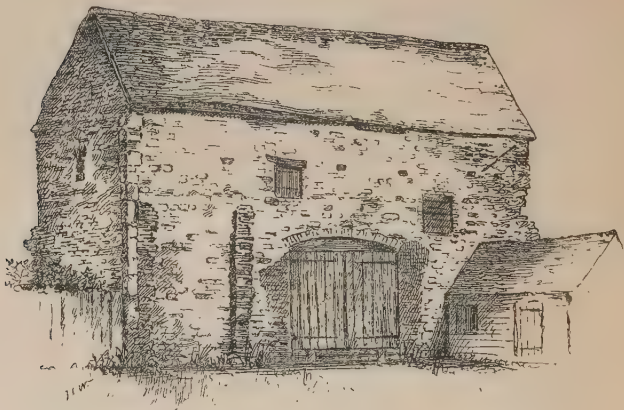
Bede names two centres of Cedd's spiritual rule—viz., Ythancestir and Tilbury. The latter of these, so well known from the fort at the entrance of the Thames,

opposite Gravesend, must then have been a quiet and remote place, and here the bishop formed a monastic establishment of those converts whom he believed capable of observing the discipline of the regular life, so far as these rude people were then fit for it. Ythancestir, the more important of these ecclesiastical residences, is described as being on the bank of the Pante, now the Blackwater. Ythancestir has been identified with the site of the Roman fortress of Othona, near Bradwell-juxta-Mare, at the north-east corner of the hundred of Dengie. At the time of the Roman occupation Othona was the chief fort of our conquerors on the flat eastern shores north of the Thames; it commanded the southern point of the wide estuary leading up to Maldon. Around this fortress there had grown up, during the four centuries of their occupation, a considerable city. After the exodus of the Romans, the various invading hordes of the Anglo-Saxons doubtless destroyed, in the earlier days of their landing, the chief features of the fort and city. As time went on the East Saxons established themselves in considerable numbers on the site of the old city, and it was here that the bishop gathered round him a number of priests and deacons to form the nucleus of a native Church.

The wall which gave its name to the Christian Church at Ythancestir was that which surrounded the fortress and town of Othona. Here stand to the present day the considerable desecrated remains of the chapel of St. Peter-on-the-Wall. It owes its name, which goes back to medieval days, when it was described as *Capella de la Val*, or *St. Peter-ad-Murum*, to the fact that this early Christian church has been built right across a Roman wall, formed of small squared stones bonded at intervals by tiles, which has here a thickness of 14 feet. From discoveries made during excavations in 1864-65, it became apparent that Cedd built the first Christian church or small minster of this kingdom right across the outer west wall of the levelled fortress; this was probably done with the idea of securing a good foundation for a considerable part of the fabric.

The most experienced antiquaries and ecclesiologists

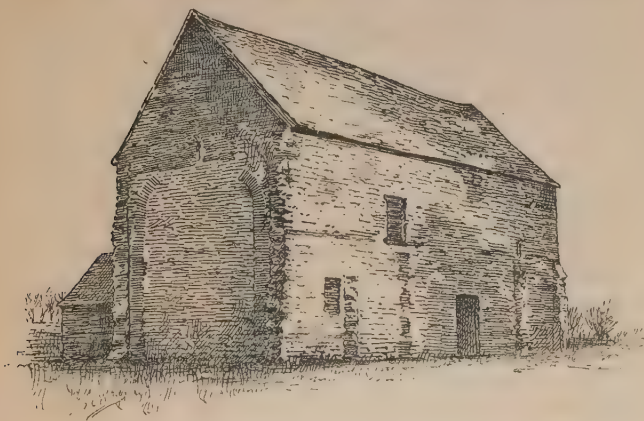
now agree that we have in this tall barn-like building, which still stands out so clearly amidst its flat and somewhat dreary surroundings, the actual fabric that was erected here in the seventh century in the days of St. Cedd. This being the case, it is pardonable to give here a brief description of the present state of the fabric, together with an outline account of its history ; for it is assuredly one of the most interesting of hallowed buildings throughout the whole of England.



ST. PETER-ON-THE-WALL, S.W.

Every churchman of the new diocese of Essex ought to feel thankful that such an inestimable relic of the first planting of definite Christianity in their midst is still standing as a witness of the ancient faith. The building now consists of a small but substantial and well-proportioned nave, with traces of the eastern apse and the western porch. It is of exactly the same type as the church of St. Pancras, Canterbury, built by St. Augustine, and had a triple arch into the apse. The outer measurements give a length of 54 feet 8 inches, and a breadth of 26 feet 2 inches ; the thickness of the walls averages 2 feet 2 inches ; the height of the walls, at the sides and at the spring of the gables at the east and west ends, is

about 25 feet. The most interesting part of the fabric is the west end, where the quoins or angle-stones are formed from long and heavy blocks of squared oölite stone, which have obviously come from some older building, as they are chiselled in several places with clean-cut mortises, which are quite useless in their present position. It may be safely concluded that these stones, as well as others in the jambs of some of the windows, have come from the great Roman gateway which stood



ST. PETER-ON-THE-WALL, N.E.

near this place. The whole of the fabric, with the exception of an obviously later roof and a filling-up of the east gable over the former apse, shows a re-use of Roman materials, both of tiles and small squared stones, set in wide-jointed mortar. The tiles are chiefly used, after an ingenious fashion, for turning the heads of the arches of the window at the west end, and of the arch at the entrance of the great apse. The built-up doorway at the west end was originally sheltered by a porch of a single stage, which was raised at a later period to serve as a small bell-tower. The east end of the chapel shows the remains of the opening into the former apse ;

the brickwork above probably represents the repairs done after a fire in 1442.¹

When the pagan Danes made their various raids up the Blackwater in the ninth and tenth centuries, this little church would almost certainly be sacked and the interior fittings burnt. When the building came to be again used for Divine worship in pre-Norman days, the population had probably much shifted. Some seven miles due south is the thriving village or small town of Southminster, whose very name implies an early Christian settlement. It seems likely, therefore, that Southminster was the second Christian settlement of importance in this district, and that its name originated through the site being several miles to the south of Ythancestir, where the first or old minster stood. In Norman times, when associations with the native English saints were as a rule set at naught, the little church of St. Cedd's foundation would still further lose its importance, and hence it came about that St. Peter-on-the-Wall became a mere chapelry of the parish of Bradwell-on-Sea.

In Bishop Gilbert's register (1436-48) there is the record of an inquisition held here in 1442, when the jury found that the chapel of St. Peter-ad-Murum was dependent on Bradwell and a chapel of ease to it, and that the rector supplied a priest to say Mass therein on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. It is described as having a chancel, nave, and small tower, with two bells, and it is stated that after a recent fire the chancel had been repaired by the rector and the nave by the parishioners. Its use as a place of worship came to an end, with a large number of other churches and chapels, at the time of the Reformation. During the reigns of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I., the building was used as a lighthouse or fire-beacon, to guide the shipping entering the Blackwater. Then came a further desecration, when this ancient church of St. Cedd was utilized, as it is at present (1908), for farm purposes, with its accompanying mutilations.

¹ Those who may require fuller particulars as to the fabric and undoubted age of this church or chapel are referred to a long illustrated article in *The Builder* of September 15, 1906, by the present writer.

Surely the days cannot be far distant when this, the most ancient shrine of the Christian faith in the old kingdom of the East Saxons and the present Diocese of Essex, will be once more rescued for the worship of the Most High.

Returning from this digression as to the church of St. Peter-on-the-Wall, it may further be stated with regard to Cedd that he baptized Swithhelm, Sigebert's successor in the rule of the East Saxons, when he was at the court of the East Anglian king, at Rendlesham, Suffolk. Cedd continued from time to time to visit his northern home, and built the monastery at Lastingham in the year 660. Four years later Cedd visited Lastingham, proceeding thence to attend the important Synod of Whitby; but the plague broke out in the monastic house of Lastingham, and Cedd caught the infection and died. The pestilence that carried off Bishop Cedd spread to his diocese in the south. The East Saxons were at that time ruled by the joint rulers or chiefs Sigehere and Sebbe. Sigehere with that part of the kingdom (probably the London district) over which he ruled lapsed into idolatry, and the old idol worship was resumed, in the fanatical hope of thereby staying the plague. Sebbe, however, remained faithful to Cedd's teaching. Eventually Sigehere and his people, through the influence of Jaruman, Bishop of Mercia, were brought back to the paths of righteousness, destroyed their false temples, reopened their churches, and, in the words of Bede, "rejoiced in confessing the name of Christ, which they had opposed, being more desirous to die in Him with the faith of the resurrection than to live in the filth of apostasy among their idols."

The immediate successor of Cedd in the East Saxon bishopric was Wine. On his death, in 675, Earkenwald was consecrated, and took up his residence in London. He was a man of exceptionally holy life and conversation. Before his consecration he had built two famous monasteries, the one for himself at Chertsey, on the Surrey side of the Thames, and the other for his sister Ethelburga at Barking in Essex. In this rapid outline there is no space to say anything further as to this

great Bishop of London, or of his sister, whose influence for good was so marvellous and extensive in the government of her celebrated house in Essex. Waldhere succeeded Earkenwald as Bishop of London in 693. Theodred, Bishop of London from 926 to 951, bequeathed his Essex lands at Tillingham and Dunmoe to the cathedral church of St. Paul, adding to the statement as to the former property the words "Let the men be freed for my soul," meaning by this to secure the formal manumission of all the serfs attached to that estate. Tillingham was near to Ythancestir and possibly a former seat of the bishopric. These lands formed the endowment of the prebends of Eadland, Wildland, and Reculverland. Another ancient Essex prebend of the great church of St. Paul's had its lands in Walton. Most of this was swallowed up by the encroachments of the sea previous to the Conquest, and is therefore named *Præbenda Consumpta-per-Mare*.

In addition to the famous Benedictine nunnery at Barking, there is another Essex religious house of pre-Conquest foundation—viz., the almost equally famous abbey of canons at Walton, founded in 1061. There was also the small alien Benedictine cell of Mersea, founded in the days of the Confessor, as well as an alleged nunnery at Chich, which is said to have been founded before 683. Certain lands at Chich (afterwards known as St. Osyth's) formed part of the bequests of Bishop Theodred to the church of St. Paul's.

It is now well understood that the great Domesday Survey of 1086 was drawn up for assessment purposes, and that therefore the mention of either churches or priests is merely incidental, and conveys no kind of reliable record as to the position of religion from any standpoint. Upwards of thirty priests happen to be mentioned in the Essex Survey, of whom seven were householders in Colchester. It was only with the clergy as holders of land that Domesday was really concerned. "At Latton we read of a priest who holds no less than half a hide belonging to a church. At Montesbury in Hallingbury there had been a priest who had similarly 20 acres, but these had been taken from the church. So, too, at Wethers-

field, Gilbert, the son of Warin, had obtained possession of 30 acres, which had been held in almon by a priest in King Edward's time, and of $8\frac{1}{2}$ acres belonging to another church. An interesting entry under Horndon-on-the-Hill shows us a deacon holding 30 acres and a fourth share in the church, which is described as of the King's gift (or almon). At Peldon, where a deacon was tenant-in-chief, the church had 30 acres, which was also the extent of the glebe at Downham, while at 'Harflet,' in Dengie hundred, it was 40. At High Easter the church had possessed half a hide, but this was held of Geoffrey de Mandeville by one of his retainers at the time of the Survey. An entry, valuable for the origin of glebe, records that at Stifford the 30 acres belonging to the church had been given to it by neighbours. No less important is an entry under Horndon-on-the-Hill, which is suggestive, if one may say so, of an Anglo-Saxon 'squarson.' 'Ælfric the priest free man' had held there a manor assessed at two hides and a quarter, out of which he had bestowed on 'a certain church' three-quarters of a hide, which 'Suain took away from the church.' It is probable that in all these instances the estimate represents, not the area, but the assessment in hides and 'geld' acres. The most important endowment in the county was that of St. Peter's, Colchester, which had possessed an estate assessed at 2 hides, and had been held in the Confessor's time by two priests of the king's gift (or almon). In 1086 a quarter of this estate was in the hands of 'Eudo dapifer,' and the rest was claimed by Robert, son of Ralf de Hastings."¹

There are, however, several cases in Essex in which priests are named without glebe, wherein the priest is classed with the villeins. In such instances it may be concluded that the priest is entered as having conjointly with the villeins a part in the agricultural system; thus at Little Canfield it is stated that "there were then one priest and thirty villeins, now one priest and seven villeins."

The actual churches named in the Essex Survey are

¹ *Victoria County History of Essex*, i. 384.

very few. The church of the manor of High Easter is named, whilst at Colchester the church of St. Peter and the hamlet church of Greenstead are mentioned. But the incidental and indirect evidence of the presence of pre-Conquest churches all over the area of the populous kingdom of the East Saxons is abundant. At Colchester, for instance, there are good reasons for concluding that four other churches, in addition to the two just named, were in existence.¹ The wooden church at Greenstead by Ongar is, of course, of pre-Conquest date, whilst archæology tells us that there are remains of Saxon stone architecture in the churches of West Mersea, Great Hallingbury, Tollesbury, Prittlewell, and at least half a dozen other examples. Certain of the county dedications point to English foundations of an early date. Such are St. Osyth; St. Runwald, Colchester; St. Albright, Stanway; St. Ethelbert, Belchamp Otton; St. Swithun, Great Chishall; St. Edward, Rumford; St. Botolph, Colchester, Beauchamp Roding, and Hadstock; and St. Edmund, which occurs four times—viz., at Abbess Roding, East Mercia, Ingatestone, and Tendring. Nor is it possible to conceive that any of the numerous Essex manors held by the diocesan church of St. Paul's, by the metropolitan church at Canterbury, by the abbeys of Barking, Ely, and St. Edmund's, or by the canons of Waltham and of St. Martin's, London, were destitute of either church or chapel before ever the Normans invaded England.

Among the muniments of St. Paul's is a valuable series of transcripts of the leases of its Essex manors during the twelfth century, which have been printed by the Camden Society in a volume entitled "The Domesday of St. Paul's." Another valuable historical fragment pertaining to the Church history of the county is that which records a manorial visitation undertaken by Ralph de Diceto, in the year 1181, of the various manors and churches under the peculiar jurisdiction of St. Paul's. The Chapter kept most of the rectories at this time in their own hands, but appointed vicars. But the most interesting of all the St. Paul's documents relative to

¹ Cutts' *Colchester*, pp. 96, 97.

Essex is a contemporary account of the visitation of its churches during the year 1297, which was printed for the Camden Society in 1895. This visitation was undertaken by Dean Ralph de Baldock. West Lee was the first of the Essex churches visited. It was in a melancholy condition : the churchyard fence was broken and cattle were feeding therein ; the wooden font leaked and had no lock to the cover ; there was no bell, and the windows of the nave were unglazed. The next church, Navestock, afforded a pleasing contrast : the fabric was in excellent order, whilst the supply of bells, books, vestments, and general church goods was on a generous scale. At Barking one of the chancel windows was broken, and an Ordinal of the Use of St. Paul's, an ivory comb, and a Lent veil were missing. Tillingham had an unusual wealth of images ; in addition to the great rood with Sts. Mary and John, there were images of the Blessed Virgin and of Sts. Andrew, Edmund, James, Catherine, Margaret, Michael, Nicholas, Peter, Paul, and Stephen. Among the books was the Ordinal of St. Paul's. A fly-fan—for keeping flies from the chalice, an interesting survival of Eastern use—and an iron for stamping wafers were missing. The churches of Wickham St. Paul and Thorpe were entered as unconsecrated. This probably means that there had been such an extension of the church, or removal of the high altar, as canonically demanded reconsecration. At Belchamp St. Paul there was a wooden altar in a loft at the west end of the nave, with images of Sts. Giles and Edmund. There was also a wooden altar at Barking, whilst at Thorpe the high altar is described as being of brass and stone.¹

In this rapid outline sketch of the Church history of Essex, special references to Chelmsford are reserved for later pages. It will be found that Chelmsford played an important part in the ecclesiastical ministrations of Bishop Sudbury, who held the See of London from 1362 to 1375.

¹ The full inventories of the Essex churches of this date are of the highest interest. There is a good analysis of them in vol. i, of the *Victoria County History of Essex*, pp. 12-16.

In 1388 a return was ordered by Parliament of certificates as to the foundation, statutes, and property of all ecclesiastical gilds and brotherhoods. About 500 of these returns are still extant in the Public Record Office, eight of which are from the county of Essex. All of these guilds were of comparatively recent origin: they were at Chelmsford; Hatfield Broadoak; St. Peter's, Maldon; All Saints', Maldon; Rayleigh; and Saffron Walden (three).

Essex was the scene of many early endeavours to stamp out heresy, in accordance with the fierce customs of the times. The somewhat vague religious and socialistic views which generally passed under the name of Lollardry seem to have smouldered on in certain parts of the county from the days of Edward III. right down to the Reformation. The sect is said to have been founded in 1315 by Walter Lollard, who was burned for heresy at Cologne in 1322. John Ball, the priest who took an active part in Wat Tyler's rebellion, was living in Essex in 1366, when he was cited by the Dean of Barking to appear before the primate for his heretical preaching; ten years later he was in the neighbourhood of Colchester. In 1402, a year after Parliament had passed the Act *De Hæretico Comburendo* for the burning of heretics, John Becket, of Battiswick, suffered for his Wycliffite views, and in 1430 John Bagley, vicar of Manuden, was convicted of heresy, degraded from the priesthood, and burned. Another victim of the fire about this latter date was William Chierelyng, of Colchester, who was "endited of lollardrye," on the petition of the Abbot of Colchester.

At a later period the settlement of foreigners, especially the Dutch, at Colchester helped forward the Reforming movement, and early in 1527 some forty persons were arrested in the neighbourhood of Colchester, at Witham, and at Braintree. Another centre of Protestant teaching was in the parishes of Bumpstead, Birdbrook, and Ridgwell, where over eighty were apprehended for heresy.

The large number of religious foundations within the limits of the county must have caused Essex to

suffer severely from the dissolution of the various monastic houses in the days of Henry VIII. Five houses of Benedictine monks, two of Benedictine nuns, three of Cistercian monks, three of Cluniac monks, twelve of Austin canons, one of Premonstratensian canons, four of friars, as well as several semi-religious hospitals, then came to an end. The result was beyond doubt specially disastrous to the poor, and also to the tenantry of the monastic lands, who, as a rule, cultivated under far more favourable circumstances than when under changing secular landlords.

Far more spiritual distress was, however, caused by the suppression of the chantries, as planned by Henry VIII. and carried out under his youthful successor. The result of this gross policy of confiscation was to deprive the Essex parishes of a great number of assistant clergy or curates, and to close a variety of the smaller places of worship; but this is further explained under Chelmsford.

It is not proposed in this sketch to say anything as to the changes in the religious settlement that went on in gradual development from the days of Henry VIII. down to the restoration of the episcopacy and monarchy in 1660, or of the fierce persecution under Queen Mary, and the less fierce but very genuine persecution under Queen Elizabeth, or of the Puritan outrages at the dawn of the Commonwealth. To deal satisfactorily with such subjects, even for a single county, would require a volume at least ten times the magnitude of the present one. The material for such a work with regard to Essex is most exceptionally abundant, and would well repay the attention of anyone possessed of the necessary qualifications of ample leisure, power of research, and impartial temperament.

From the earliest days of diocesan construction, Essex formed a highly important part and by far the largest area of the diocese of London, which also included Middlesex and Hertford. It was not until the days of Bishop Blomfield, who ruled over this see from 1828 to 1856, that a change came. In the year 1845, in accordance with the developed plans of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the county of Essex, together with a

part of Hertfordshire, were taken from the diocese of London and united to that of Rochester.

It may here be mentioned that as early as 1108 the see of London was divided into the four archdeaconries of London, Essex, Middlesex, and Colchester. The three last of these exercised jurisdiction over different portions of Essex. The archdeaconry of Middlesex, by a singular and apparently inexplicable arrangement, extended right across the centre of this county, until in one place it touched the northern county boundary between the archdeaconries of Essex and Colchester. As Colchester comes the last in dignity, it is possible that that archdeaconry was formed later than the other three; and that up to the time of its foundation the Archdeacon of Middlesex had control over the whole of the north of Essex as well as over Middlesex. The old divisions of these three archdeaconries, together with their respective rural deaneries, are shown on the accompanying outline map. On the same map are shown the various old peculiars, or separate jurisdictions, which were exempt from the usual episcopal jurisdiction of the diocesan.

The change that was made by order of Council on August 8, 1845, which came into operation on January 1, 1846, declared that the new bounds for the see of Rochester embraced the whole of Essex, with the exception of the nine parishes of Barking, East Ham, West Ham, Little Ilford, Low Leyton, Walthamstow, Wanstead, St. Mary Woodford, and Chingford, which were to remain in the diocese of London. An episcopal residence for the Bishop of Rochester was provided at Danbury, in the heart of Essex. In 1863 the nine parishes assigned to London were transferred to Rochester, the whole of Essex being thus included in the Kent see.

This singularly awkward readjustment of episcopal boundaries, utterly at variance with ecclesiastical history, only lasted about thirty years. The creation of a new bishopric of St. Albans by an Act of 1875 necessitated a change. By this Act the whole of the counties of Essex and Hertford formed the diocese of St. Albans.



MAP OF THE OLD DEANERIES.

Essex was under the jurisdiction of three Archdeacons :

The Deaneries
of Barking
of Barstaple
of Chafford
of Chelmsford
of Dengley
of Ongar

Arch-
deaconry
of
Essex.

The Deaneries
of Colchester
of Lexden
of Newport
of Sampford
of Tendring
of Witham

Arch-
deaconry
of Col-
chester.

The Deaneries
of Dunmow
of Harlow
of Hedingham

Arch-
deaconry
of Middle-
sex.

The Order of Council carrying out these provisions was made on April 30, 1877. These changes of diocesan areas naturally brought about readjustment of archdeaconries and rural deaneries. The Archdeacon of Middlesex ceased in 1846 to exercise any control in Essex, and the county was divided between the two Archdeacons of Essex and Colchester. The old deanery names and divisions, as appointed in Norman days, have since that date undergone a considerable variety of changes.

SUFFRAGAN BISHOPS.

In pre-Reformation days episcopal functions were often exercised within the borders of the old kingdom of the East Saxons by suffragans of the Bishops of London, specially commissioned. Thus between 1322 and 1327 Peter Bononiensis, Bishop of Corbair, in Dalmatia, acted as suffragan of London; Richard, Archbishop of Nazareth, in 1361; Thomas "Lambergensis," in 1362; William, Bishop of Tournay, 1399-1406; John Sewale, Bishop of Cyrene, 1417-23; Thomas Weall, Bishop of Pavada, 1492-1502; Edward, Bishop of Gallipoli, 1503; John Young, Bishop of Gallipoli, and Archdeacon of London, 1513-26; and Thomas Chatham, Bishop of Sidon, 1535.

In addition to these suffragans *in partibus*, the following Irish bishops occasionally acted as London suffragans: John Dongan, Bishop of Derry, 1392; John, Bishop of Dromore, 1419-26; John Geese, Bishop of Waterford, 1424; Richard, Bishop of Ross, 1424-31; John Heyne, Bishop of Clonfert, 1443-48; George Bran, Bishop of Dromore, 1497; and John Bell, Bishop of Mayo, 1499.

The Act 26 Henry VIII., c. 14, recognizes the need of suffragan bishops, "which have been accustomed to be had in this realm, for the more speedy administration of the Sacraments, and other good and devout things and laudable customs." It names twenty-six places which might give their names to bishops-suffragan, and enacts that the town of Colchester shall be taken and received as one of them. This Act was repealed in

1554 by Queen Mary, but revived in 1559 by Queen Elizabeth. Under Henry's Act, William More, the last Abbot of Saffron Walden (which he surrendered in 1538), was in 1536 consecrated Bishop of Colchester and suffragan to the see of Ely, in order "that he might share the anxious labours" of the bishop of that diocese; he died in 1540. More than half a century elapsed before another bore the name of Bishop of Colchester. In 1592 John Stone was consecrated under that title to act as suffragan to the Bishop of London; he died in 1608.

In 1882 Alfred Blomfield, Archdeacon of Essex, was consecrated Bishop of Colchester, as first bishop-suffragan of the diocese of St. Albans. He died in 1894, and was buried at Shenfield, Essex.

On December 28, 1894, Henry Frank Johnson (Archdeacon of Essex, 1885) was consecrated fourth Bishop of Colchester, at St. Paul's, by Archbishop Benson and nine assistant bishops.

A second suffragan bishopric for the diocese of St. Albans, with Barking as its title, was appointed by order in Council dated February 11, 1901, pursuant to the Suffragans' Nomination Act of 1888. Thomas Stevens, Archdeacon of Essex, 1894, was consecrated Bishop of Barking, in St. Margaret's, Westminster, on February 17, 1901.

THE NEW DIOCESE.

With regard to the recent action taken by Churchmen to restore a bishopric to Essex, which shall be coterminous with the county boundaries, it is only necessary here to state, after the briefest fashion, the conclusion come to by the representative committee who met at the Church House on March 5, 1908. It was then reported that 388 out of 461 benefices of the county of Essex had made a return as to the choice of the see town, representing more than a million out of 1,088,857 of the population, according to the census returns of 1901.

Twenty-eight benefices gave their first votes for Woodhead, Barking, Waltham Abbey, or Thaxted.

Chelmsford obtained the votes of 191 benefices, 256 clergy, and 428,375 laity.

Colchester 101 benefices, 121 clergy, and 120,657 laity.

West Ham 63 benefices, 119 clergy, and 321,677 laity.

Much the same result was arrived at by the votes of public meetings—namely, Chelmsford 65, Colchester 40, and West Ham 36.

It was consequently resolved :

“That the church of Essex having in so unmistakable a manner expressed its opinion, Chelmsford shall be suggested to the authority as the most suitable seat for the new diocese ; that for the present no residence be purchased for the Essex bishop, but that the sum of £10,000 be invested, and the interest thereof be paid over to the bishop until the new see is instituted, for the rent of the house.”

THE CHURCH OF CHELMSFORD.

The manor of Chelmsford had formed part of the endowment of the bishopric of the East Saxons, afterwards known as the See of London, for many a long year before the days of the Norman Conquest. The report of the Domesday Commissioners for Essex, returned in the year 1086, records the fact that Bishop William held Chelmsford in the days of Edward the Confessor. They state that the bishop then held it in demesne as a manor of 8 hides ; there had been two ploughs on the demesne, there were then three ; there was woodland for 300 swine, 30 acres of meadow, and a mill, and it was stated to be worth £8 a year. This manor became afterwards known as “Bishop’s Hall.” Moulsham, a hamlet of the parish of Chelmsford, had been held in the Confessor’s time, as it was then, by the abbey church of St. Peter at Westminster. It had been worth £9 a year, but had then risen to £12. The name “Bishop’s Hall,” which was used as early as the twelfth century, seems to imply, beyond doubt, that the Bishops

of London in early days occasionally used their Chelmsford manor-house as a residence.

The manor-house of Bishop's Hall stood on the north side of the town, near the river, about half a mile from the parish church. It was destroyed by fire in the reign of Edward III., and, though rebuilt, does not appear to have afterwards been a house of any importance, or occupied as an occasional residence by bishops.

Near to Bishop's Hall, and between that manor-house and the high road, stood the "free chapel" of St. Margaret. This was a small independent benefice; the term "free chapel" implies that it was exempt from the control of the incumbent in whose parish it stood. It seems to have been an early foundation, and was presumably erected as a chapel of some importance for the use of the Bishops of London when there resident. The appointment of chaplains rested in the hands of the bishop. Collations to this chapel are of fairly frequent occurrence in the episcopal registers; a few references to it can also be gleaned from other sources. The Patent Rolls of 1349 record the presentation in April of Walter de Farndale, described as "warden of the free chapel of St. Margaret, Chelmsford," to a moiety of the church of Turvey, Bedfordshire. Three years later, Walter Sex, described as chaplain of St. Margaret's, was presented by the Crown to the church of Belchamp. In the Vatican registers for 1363 there is an entry of the exchange of benefices between Thomas, son of Robert Tebaud, of Yeovil, chaplain of St. Margaret's, with Adam Tebaud, rural dean of Lynn. The income pertaining to this place of worship was confiscated under Edward VI., and the building, like so many others in Essex similarly treated, fell into disuse.

Bishop William held the see of London from 1051 to 1075. He was followed by Bishop Hugh d'Orivalle, 1075-85. In April of the year of the compilation of the great Domesday Survey, Maurice, the second Norman Bishop of London, was consecrated at Winchester by Lanfranc.

Chelmsford was not at this time a place of any particular importance; the towns of the county at that

date were Colchester and Maldon. Bishop Maurice was, however, the means of bringing much traffic to Chelmsford, by causing a bridge to be built, in the year 1100, near the confluence of the rivers Chelmer and Cann. Up to that date the old road to the north from London passed through the village of Writtle, about two miles to the west of Chelmsford. Bridges were at that date costly novelties, as is shown by the remarkable number of place-names ending in "ford" throughout this well-watered county. The course of the great London road is marked by Stratford, Ilford, Romford, Widford, Chelmsford, Eastford, Copford, and Empford, now Stanway Bridge. Chelmsford, destined ere long to become the county town, owes a debt of gratitude to another Bishop of London for the next step in her development. William de Ste.-Mère-l'Église was the means of making this place a considerable centre for the trade and agriculture of the district. This bishop, who ruled over the see of London from 1199 to 1224, obtained from the newly-crowned King John in the first year of his episcopacy a charter for a weekly market at Chelmsford, and in the following year he obtained another charter for an annual fair.

Although there is no distinct mention of a church at either Chelmsford or Moulsham in the Domesday Survey, there can be no reasonable doubt whatever that a manor so long held by bishops would have its church in pre-Norman as well as in Norman days; and it is almost equally probable that the abbots of Westminster would see that their manor at Moulsham was at least supplied with a manorial chapel for Divine worship. It may, too, be safely assumed that the Saxon church here, on the site of its successor, would most likely be of timber, and that it would be replaced by the Normans with one of flint and stone.

It may here be mentioned that a careful examination of the outer masonry of the great west tower of Chelmsford yields clear evidence to the trained eye that some of the squared stones reused therein were trimmed during the Norman period, as they bear traces of the "axeing" peculiar to that date. There are also in the

same situation a few moulded stones which pertain to the Early English period of the days of Henry III. The most notable of these is a large through stone, high up in the north-east buttress of the tower, which can be seen from the roof of the nave. This stone shows the circular base of a slender shaft.

Before proceeding to some account of the rebuilding of this church towards the beginning of the fifteenth century, mention may be made of a few facts that have been gleaned with regard to the record history of this church before that date.

When the Taxation Roll of Pope Nicholas was drawn up in 1291, the annual value of the rectory of Chelmsford was returned as £13 6s. 8d. This is the earliest date at which we get definite information as to the decanal divisions of the diocese of London. There were at that time eight deaneries in the archdeaconry of Essex, and Chelmsford gave the title to the first of them. The parishes then within the rural deanery of Chelmsford numbered twenty-four. They were Great Baddow, Little Baddow, Blackmore, Boreham, Broomfield, Chelmsford, Danbury, "Gynge (Chignal) Mounteny," "Gynge ad Petram," "Ginge Regine," Hanningfield East, Hanningfield South, Hanningfield West, Harford Stock, Great Leighs, Little Leighs, Rettendon, Runwell, Sandon, Springfield, Great Waltham, Little Waltham, Widford, and Woodham Ferrers.

The Vatican registers tell us that, in December, 1305, Thomas de Broncille, rector of Chelmsford, was dispensed by Pope Clement V. to retain that church, he having resigned those of Merston and Nersted, in the respective dioceses of Rochester and London, which he had a dispensation to hold, notwithstanding illegitimacy, with permission to retain fruits already received.

There is conclusive proof that Chelmsford was in possession of a church of considerable magnitude long before its rebuilding in the days of Henry VI. In the time of the celebrated Simon Sudbury, who held the see of London from 1362 to 1375, when he was translated to the primacy of Canterbury, Chelmsford parish church was the scene of many an episcopal

function, the full record of which would demand considerable space. History has in certain respects dealt very falsely with this prelate, who has on several occasions been rashly accused of wholesale neglect of diocesan work, and of being non-resident and chiefly occupied in foreign embassies. Dean Hook, in his *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, goes so far as to say that Sudbury, as a "non-resident bishop was an insult and an injury to which Londoners would not easily submit." Had the dean, however, taken the trouble to consult Sudbury's own register or act-book, which is still preserved in the south-west tower of St. Paul's Cathedral, he would have found that his hasty surmise was absolutely false. So far as Essex was concerned, this vast portion of London diocese probably knew Sudbury for thirteen years as a hard-working resident diocesan better than any other prelate who has ever held the see of London.

Wickham Bishops was a favourite country residence of this prelate, and in the chapel attached to that manor-house various of his official acts were performed. At times also he resided at Clacton, which was another of his Essex manors. Bishops Hall, Chelmsford, as we have already mentioned, had been burnt down; but the bishop, recognizing Chelmsford as the county town—although it was some ten miles distant from Wickham Bishops—usually held there his ordinations when they were of any size.

Within a few months of his consecration—viz., June 11, 1362—Simon Sudbury held an ordination in the church of the Blessed Virgin, Chelmsford, when he ordained eighteen to the first tonsure, eleven as acolytes, seventeen as sub-deacons, nine as deacons, and fourteen as priests. About half of the total in this ordination were "religious"—that is to say, assigned to monastic houses. An exceptional feature of this particular ordination was the large number of those who bore letters dimissory for other dioceses; of the beneficed sub-deacons three were for Lincoln diocese, and one each for Winchester, Worcester, and Chichester; of the deacons, four were for the respective dioceses of Lincoln, Norfolk, Worcester,

and York. On the following day, in the same church, six more candidates were admitted for the first tonsure.

On September 24 of the like year Sudbury ordained 104 candidates at Chelmsford, and 68 others on December 17 and 18. Other ordinations held in this church during Sudbury's rule over the diocese were: December 23, 1368, when 125 were ordained; 84 on September 27, 1369; 173 on September 21, 1370; 54 on December 20, 1371; and 129 on June 11, 1373.¹

The gild returns of the time of Richard II. include a certificate, entered in the Chancery of the King on the Vigil of the Purification, 1389, testifying that a certain fraternity, in honour of the Holy Trinity, had been founded about twenty years ago in the church at Chelmsford. It is therein stated that the gild was founded out of the devotion of certain of the faithful of the town and still continued; that the mothers and sisters of the fraternity all attended the Mass of the day on Trinity Sunday, making voluntary offerings; that they had a common chest in the church, wherein each member placed yearly 20d.; that part of this money went to sustain a wax light burning before the image of the Trinity on all festivals, and partly for a chaplain who celebrated for the good estate of the brethren and sisters during life and for their souls after death; that two masters were elected yearly to rule the gild; that the brethren and sisters

¹ The following list shows the places in the county during this episcopacy where ordinations were held, the date, and the number ordained:

1362: Chelmsford, parish church, 11th June, 69; Chelmsford, parish church, 12th June, 6 to first tonsure; Coggeshall, conventual church, 14th June, 5 to first tonsure; Copford, parish church, 26th June, 2 to first tonsure; Wickham, manorial chapel, 8th July, 1 to first tonsure; Barking, conventual church, 8th August, 4 to first tonsure; Chelmsford, 24th September, 104; Chelmsford, 17th December, 49; Chelmsford, 18th December, 19. 1364: Southminster, parish church, 18th May, 59; Maldon, Carmelite church, 29th December, 60. 1365: Wickham, 30th May, 45. 1366: Witham, parish church, 19th September, 49; Wickham, 19th December, 40. 1368: Chelmsford, 23rd December, 125. 1369: Chelmsford, 22nd September, 84. 1370: Clacton, manorial chapel, 11th September, 3 to first tonsure; Chelmsford, 21st September, 173. 1371: Wickham, 31st May, 42; Chelmsford, 20th December, 54. 1373: Chelmsford, 11th June, 129 (*Lond. Epis. Reg.*, Sudbury, *passim*).

were bound to attend the obsequies of a deceased member if held within ten miles of Chelmsford; that they contributed 1d. each towards the funeral expenses of a poor member; that they had at that date 100s. 8d. in their chest to be used for the salary of the chaplain and for sustaining the wax light; and that the fraternity had no other goods or chattels, lands or tenements. This gild may or may not have been disbanded at the time when particulars as to chantries and gilds were taken by commission in the days of Henry VIII. and Edward VI., for those commissions only took cognizance of endowments, whereas this fraternity of the Holy Trinity was wholly sustained by the voluntary payments of the members.

In 1404 an indult was granted by Pope Boniface IX. to John Cateby, rector of Chelmsford, licentiate of Civil Law, to hear the confessions of all his parishioners, and to grant them absolution, even in cases reserved to bishops, enjoining salutary penance; he also obtained a like concession with regard to the parishioners of Kingsland, Herefordshire, of which parish Cateby was likewise rector. The indult also stated that this concession did not apply to cases reserved for the Holy See.

In the early days of Henry VI., when John Kemp was Bishop of London, the old church of Chelmsford was rebuilt on excellent lines in accordance with the architectural taste of the day, after the style which is usually known by the awkward and inappropriate term "Perpendicular." Bishop Kemp, the manorial lord of Chelmsford, was a man of some private fortune, and otherwise possessed of a great income; but this rebuilding does not seem to have been in any particular way promoted by him. As was usually the case with regard to the enormous amount of church extension and rebuilding which took place throughout the length and breadth of England during the fifteenth century, the new church fabric at Chelmsford rose from the united efforts of the townsfolk, and of special local benefactors.

The work then undertaken, which involved the entire displacement of the older church, was in the main concluded in 1424, as is known from a long inscription

which used to be prominently displayed beneath the battlements of the clerestory on the south side of the nave. This inscription (in black-letter type) was formed in letters of freestone, 9 inches high, let into panels of dressed flints, after the fashion of several such inscriptions which are still extant in East Anglian churches, notably at Long Melford. This inscription, as recorded by three Essex historians of the eighteenth century, ran as follows, though one or two of the words are conjectural restorations in places where lettering was obliterated by downcast rainpipes :

" Pray for the good estate of the Townshipe of Chelmsyford that hath been liberal willers and procoorers of helpers to thys worke & for them that first began an longest shall contenowe it in the yeare of our Lorde I thousande IIII hundredth XXIV." (1424).

It is generally supposed that the singularly well-built and lofty western tower, which is of plain but most dignified proportions, is also of this date (1424) ; it certainly partakes, with the exception of the battlements, a good deal more of the earlier than the later features of the Perpendicular style. The western doorway is a fine piece of architectural design, though somewhat marred by age. It has a squared hood-mould, and in the spandrels are shields charged respectively with the mullet and knot of the families of De Vere and Bouchier, whilst the De Vere crest—the boar—is introduced into the apex of the archway. It seems probable that these two families, particularly the first, were responsible for the building of this substantial and lofty tower. Mr. Chancellor, who was the first to draw attention to these cognizances, in the Proceedings of the Essex Archaeological Society for 1863, tells us that in 1424 John De Vere, twelfth Earl of Oxford, was at the head of that important family, and, from his known adherence to the House of Lancaster, was probably in constant communication with the court at Westminster. He would therefore have frequent occasion to travel between his baronial seat at Hedingham Castle, in this county, and London ; and as the old hostelry of Chelmsford known as The Black Boy belonged to the De Vere family and

still bears its crest, it is a fair presumption to assume that it was not only a halting-place for the earl and his retainers on their journeys, but probably used as an occasional residence. The Bouchiers were another influential baronial family of Essex, who held important estates in the county, and probably had a residence in the county town of Chelmsford. In 1424 the title was held by Sir Louis Robessart, the second husband of Elizabeth, only daughter and heiress of Sir Bartholomew Bouchier. The particular knot on the shield of the western doorway is also carved upon the tomb of one of the Lords Bouchier and Isabel Plantagenet his wife in the church of Little Easton, in this county. Above this doorway is a deeply recessed three-light window. The mouldings of this window correspond with those of the arch between the tower and the nave. The ringing-loft, in the second stage of the tower, has two-light pointed windows on the north and south sides. The third or bell-chamber stage of the tower has a three-light window of some size on each of the four sides, for the better emission of sound. A substantial pair of rectangular buttresses support each of the four angles of the tower; they are carried up to a short distance below the battlements. All these buttresses contain, beyond doubt, a fair amount of masonry, which was originally squared, from the earlier fabric. The walls of the tower are mainly constructed of flints and pebbles cunningly combined with an abundance of excellent mortar; but in the amalgam of their material, in addition to the debris of old buildings, there have been worked up in the picturesquely varied exterior many fragments of Roman tiles and septaria and of medieval brickwork.

The summit of the tower is crowned with a deep ornamental battlement, with handsomely wrought flush-work panelling of flint and stone, and is surmounted by eight crocketed pinnacles. It is obvious that this work (recently effectively repaired) is of distinctly later date than the rest of this substantial fabric, and closely corresponds in style with the south porch. The nature of this parapet is of a kind fairly common among the more



Photo by Fred. Spalding, Chelmsford.

CHELMSFORD CHURCH: THE WEST DOORWAY.

To face p. 26.

important towers of Suffolk and Norfolk, as well as in a few Essex instances, whose date can be shown from wills and other sources to be about the close of the fifteenth century.

It may, then, be taken as a certainty that the upper portion and elaborate parapet work of this tower are of considerably later date than the rest of the work. There are a large number of pre-Reformation wills which contain bequests towards the tower or steeple of this church. The earliest of these is that of Richard Corall of Chelmsford, who, by will dated February, 1496, left his body to be buried in the parish church of the Blessed Mary at Chelmsford, on the north side before the rood-loft. Among numerous other small bequests to the different gilds and lights of the church, he finally instructs his executors, immediately after his death, to give 40s. to the churchwardens for the fabric and new building of the tower (*ad fabricationem et novam edificationem campanilis eccelsie predicte*).

In 1503 Henry Love, of Moulsham, bequeathed 6s. 8d. "to the bylding of the new stepull in Chelmesford." In the same year John Stokwell, of Moulsham, left 10s. for the same purpose, expressed in similar terms. In the following year John Tomson, plumber, of Chelmsford, bequeathed 40s. "unto the bilding and making of a newe steple." Adrian Lypping, in 1506, left 6s. 8d. to "the making of the stepull." Again, at a much later date, Roger Alford, by will of August 11, 1517, desired to be buried in the chapel before Our Lady of Pity, and bequeathed 10s. "to the bilding of Chelmsford stepyll."

These various bequests, extending over a considerable period, are not a little bewildering. The term "steeple" at this date was applied interchangeably to both tower and spire, or to the two collectively. It has been thought by some that these various bequests signified the building of a considerable or massive spire, probably of stone, which has since altogether disappeared. This surmise is, however, an impossibility, for there is no kind of trace whatever at the angles of the summit of the tower of any squinches or supports necessary to carry such a construction. For our own part, we feel pretty well

satisfied that this string of entries shows that the elaborate new parapet work, combined probably with various substantial repairs, was begun in or about the year 1496, and that on the summit of the tower thus strengthened there was raised one of those comparatively light spires, formed of a lead-covered wooden framework, which used to be of fairly common occurrence in England, and of which a variety of samples, such as Hemel Hempstead, Herts, or Hadley, Suffolk, still remain. That such a work would be prolonged over a considerable number of years is entirely in accordance with a variety of precedents that might be adduced, as to the remarkable slowness in building, and gradual development as funds came in, of such church work as towers and spires. Building of this kind involved no interruption to the services, and in the cases where accounts of church building of this period or earlier are extant, it is manifest that towers were generally the work of a very large number of benefactors contributing small sums towards the final achievement.

It has been supposed by some—and, indeed, somewhat rashly asserted—that there never was a spire or spirelet of any kind on the tower of Chelmsford until the present flèche was erected, in the eighteenth century; but this is a complete mistake. A highly interesting, though somewhat distant view of Chelmsford appears in the account of the travels of Cosmo III., Grand Duke of Tuscany, through England in the year 1669. This picture forms one of the views that appear in the translation of these travels, which was published in 1821. The sketch was drawn by an artist in the Grand Duke's suite, and may be taken to be a fairly faithful representation of Chelmsford church of that date from the north-west. Much of the church is obscured by the trees, but the tower and spire stand out boldly. If the proportions are correct, the spire of that date was considerably higher than the present flèche; it was somewhat higher than the two upper stages of the tower. At any rate, as will be seen from the reproduction of the centre portion of this drawing, the spire that then existed was on a larger scale and of a somewhat different construction to that now standing.

Nevertheless, its appearance makes it more likely that the spire which Duke Cosmo saw was of seventeenth-century date rather than the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Extensive repairs were certainly carried out in connexion with the tower during the year 1614, as is shown in the book of churchwardens' accounts. At that time



CHELMSFORD CHURCH, N.W., 1669.

the total expenditure on the "steeple" was £64 11s. 7d. The chief items were for carpenters' work and timber, but they included £2 3s. 4d. spent on gilding the weathercock.

This fine tower has now been crowned for more than a century and a half by a lead and timber flèche or small spire of somewhat unusual construction. It has been styled "a miserable apology for a spire," and condemned as "ugly in itself and quite out of place." But the workmanship is excellent of its kind; it is in

substantial repair, and now that it is well-weathered, possesses a certain grace and elegance of its own. It undoubtedly gives a special character to the tower, and in this comparatively flat district is seen on all sides from afar. Its removal, which was at one time contemplated, would, in our opinion, be disastrous. An inscription in raised lettering on the lead at the base states that—

"This spire was erected A.D. 1744. John Tindal, Rector. John Lough, Thomas Hinde, Samuel White, churchwardens. John Blatch, Edmund Mason, plumbers."

Though the general appearance of this tower undoubtedly coincides, as has already been stated, with the 1424 date of the main body of the church—many of the mouldings used being identical with those of the nave—nevertheless there are some special features which appear to suggest a certain amount of reconstruction (in addition to the battlements, *circa* 1500). The brick lining of the stair turret in the south-west angle has a decided look of Henry VII.'s time, whilst the condition and slight elevation of the stone treads, together with the unusual width of the stairway from the newel to the outer wall, seem to point to the later date rather than to 1424. At all events, the obtusely-pointed doorway, by which the staircase is entered from the level of the church, as well as the doorways opening into the ringing-loft and the bell-chamber, cannot be earlier than quite the end of the fifteenth century. The ascent to the roof is made by 122 steps, and the height of the battlements, exclusive of the *flèche*, is about 100 feet.

The unhappy downfall of the body of the church in 1800, as presently described, renders it impossible to give any full or detailed account of its construction or architecture. Suffice it to say, that the general appearance of the nave and aisles, with their fine set of lofty clerestory windows, was such as we might expect from a good scheme of church-building of the time of Henry VI. A somewhat exceptional feature was the inclusion of the tower within the ground-plan—that is to say, that there are arches in the south and north sides of the tower opening into the aisles, the aisles being



Photo by Fred. Spalding, Chelmsford.

CHELMSFORD CHURCH, PREVIOUS TO DOWNFALL OF 1800.

To face p. 30.

continued till they are nearly flush with the western face of the tower. There can be little or no doubt that the plan of the church rebuilding in 1424 included a south porch of some dignity ; but it is equally certain that this porch underwent a considerable reconstruction or refacing about the year 1500, at the time when the tower battlements were erected. The handsome flush-work in freestone and flint on the sides of the porch, as well as the chequered work at the entrance, are of this period ; and the same may be said of the five-light window to the upper room, together with the triple niche (probably for the Rood, with attendant figures) immediately over the entrance archway.

Judging from the details shown on the reproduction of a print taken shortly before the downfall of 1800, the general parapets of the nave and aisles also underwent renewal at the time of the rebuilding of the porch.

It now remains to make a brief statement or two with regard to the chancel and its aisles or chapels. It is not unlikely that the rectors of the church in the days of Henry VI., when special benefactors and the general townsfolk were rebuilding church and tower, undertook the restoration or reconstruction of this portion of the fabric, for which they were responsible. There have been of late years so many alterations and improvements made to the chancel (including a clerestory), that it scarcely seems possible to say with certainty whether its main features were of the 1424 date, or somewhat earlier or somewhat later.

On one point, however, there can be little or no doubt—namely, that the arcade of three four-centred arches between the chancel and the south chapel are decidedly later—*i.e.*, about the time of Henry VII. We get the probable date of this rebuilding of its south side in the already cited will of Richard Corall, of the year 1496, wherein he bequeathed 13s. 4d. to the reconstruction of the chancel (*ad novum constructionem et fabricacionem cancelli de Chelmysforde*). This fair-sized chapel on the south side of the chancel, now used for the daily offices, and termed the Chapel of the Holy Ghost, pertained in pre-Reformation times to the most important of the

religious fraternities of the town—the Guild of Corpus Christi; indeed, that portion of the church bore the name of Corpus Christi for many years after the suppression of the gilds, as is shown in the churchwardens' accounts of Elizabethan days.

In 1565 the following entries occur :

“Unto y^e masons for altering y^e window and mending y^e joints of y^e stones abouthte Corpus Xti geld, vs.”

“Of Wid. Brown, for y^e breaking of y^e ground in Corpus Xti to bury John Brown her husband, 6s. 8d.”

Again, in 1574 :

“Mrs. Bridges oweth for breaking y^e ground in Corpus Xti guild for y^e buriall of her husband, 6s. 8d.”

The north side of the chancel is also separated from the aisle or chapels by three arches, but of a very different character. The two pointed arches nearest to the nave are enclosed within a wide semicircular arch, with a slender pier of clustered shafts in the centre. From this pier spring the two pointed arches, with delicate open tracery filling up the space between them. In Suckling's work on some Essex churches, which was published in 1845, this wide arch, from its semicircular shape, was hastily assumed to be Norman, a mistake that has been occasionally copied. It is well known, however, that the rounded arch sometimes occurs in English Gothic at a much later period, notably in some of the arcades of the beautiful Northamptonshire churches of the valley of the Nene. The date of this work is probably earlier than 1424, but it cannot go back farther than the reign of Richard II. To this double arch, in such a position, may fairly be ascribed that often misused word—unique.

Some slight comparison may be made between the subdivision of this arch and the chancel arches of the Essex churches of Stebbing and Great Bardfield, both of which have been filled with stone tracery to form rood-screens.

It may here be remarked that various pre-Reformation wills, of later fifteenth and early sixteenth century date, show that there were within this church, in addition to the several gild altars, lights before the images

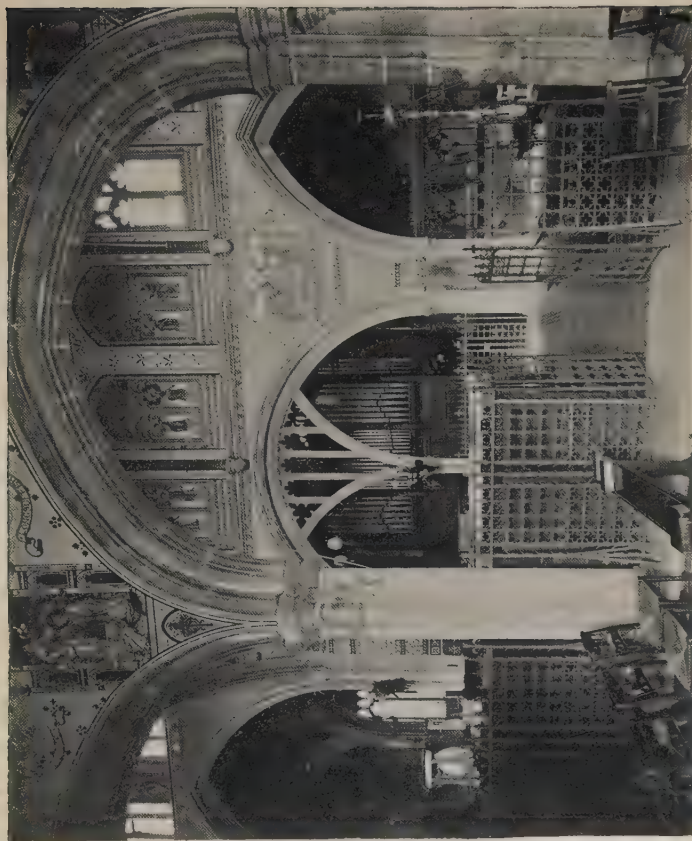


Photo by Fred. Spalding, Chelmsford.

CHELMSFORD CHURCH : THE "FAN" ARCH NORTH OF CHANCEL.

To face p. 32.

of St. Erasmus, St. Ursula, St. John the Baptist, and Our Lady of Pity.

The manor of Chelmsford, with the advowson of the church, remained in the hands of the successive Bishops of London until towards the close of the reign of Henry VIII. When that sovereign's covetousness had grown almost beyond all bounds, he brought pressure to bear upon the bishops of various sees who happened to hold manors that he desired to possess. In 1545 Henry caused Bishop Bonner to surrender to him the Chelmsford manor of Bishop's Hall, with the patronage of the rectory. Queen Elizabeth assigned this to the Mildmay family, with whom it has since remained.

When the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* was drawn up in 1534, the annual value of the rectory of Chelmsford was returned as £31 2s. 4½d.

THE CHANTRIES AND GILDS.

The *Valor* also enters four chantries at Chelmsford. Three of these were in the parish church—namely, the chantry of St. John the Baptist, of the annual value of £7 18s. 4d.; Corpus Christi, £2 19s.; and Our Lady, £1 12s. 4d. The fourth was the chantry of Our Lady in the chapel in the churchyard, which was worth £9 a year. We learn much more as to these chantries or gilds, and the work they were doing, when the time arrived for their suppression and for the confiscation of their property.

In 1545 Henry VIII. resumed his campaign against the Church and the poor, as the spoils taken from the monasteries were already exhausted. His action took the shape of an Act, vesting in the Crown all free chapels, chantries, colleges, hospitals, brotherhoods, and gilds of an ecclesiastical nature. In February, 1545-46, a commission directed to Edmund, Bishop of London, Richard Legh, and John Smythe, Kts., and to John Cocke, Nicholas Bristowe, and John Goldyng, Esqs. ordered a preliminary inquiry to be made throughout the county of Essex as to the nature and value of such foundations. The king died, however, before

aught save very partial action had been taken under this Act, and with his death its powers ceased. The evil advisers of his youthful successor resolved to follow Henry's example and an Act of a still wider nature was passed in the first year of Edward VI., when the following were appointed commissioners for Essex: John Rainsforth, Henry Parker, John Wentworth, knights; John Cocke, William Bradburys, Francis Southewell, Thomas Goldinge, and Matthew Coltehurst, esquires; and Rainold Hollingworthe and Roger Challoner, gentlemen.

The report or certificates that these commissioners drew up are dated February 17, 1548-9.

Both reports, as well as a somewhat later one giving details of the property, certify as to four chantries at Chelmsford.¹ The ordinary notion as to a chantry priest—namely, that he was but a Mass priest, with little or no duties of any other kind—is quite erroneous. Broadly speaking, every chantry priest was expected to serve as assistant parish priest, under the direction of the incumbent of the parish, or to act, in modern parlance, as curate. The commissioners definitely state this of the whole of the forty-one chantry priests of Essex, with a single exception, which was probably accidental. It is much to the credit of these gentlemen, considering that their reports were drawn up in the heat of the Reformation movement, and that they were well aware of the evil intention of the Crown, that they felt bound continuously to affirm the necessity for maintaining these assistant priests, owing to the size of the parishes, the scattered population, or the number of communicants. But their pleadings were in vain. By the legislation of 1548-9, Essex was deprived of the services of about sixty of her clergy, and the result was more spiritually disastrous than the dissolution, some ten years earlier, of the monastic foundations.

The first of the Chelmsford chantries was termed Mountney's Chantry. The chapel of this chantry was a detached building, standing in the churchyard, a short distance to the north of the chancel. It was founded

¹ Public Record Office, *College and Chantry Certificates*, Nos. 19, 20, 30.

by Sir John Mountney, Kt., in the year 1375. The return of 1545 gives its annual value as £11 10s. ; it is stated that "the said prest doth say masse in o^r lady chapell standyng in the Churcheyard of Chelmysford." In 1549 the certificate gives the gross value as £11 11s., and the clear income £10 10s., "to the kinges majesties use." The lands and tenements pertaining to this chantry were :— "put in feoffament by Sir John Mowntyney, Knight, to the intent that the Wardens of the Chauntry there, callide Mowntney chauntrye, alias our ladye chauntry, in Chelmysfode churche yerde aforseid, shulde finde a priest to singe masse in the Chappl of our ladie in chelmysforde church yerde aforeseid. And one sir Peter Wyleigh, clerke, master of arts, of the age of 56 yeres, and hath none other promocion, and of good conversacion, and teachyth A Gramner Scole their, hath done this Sixteen yeres and more, is nowe Incumbent thereof. The seid Incumbente celebratyth in the seid chappll of chelmysford."

A somewhat later and more detailed certificate states that £11 of the income came from lands and tenements in Writtle parish, whilst 10s. a year was the value of the priest's house in Chelmsford, which was situated in a lane called "Brokehole lane." There are several references to this chapel extant among pre-Reformation wills. John de Sherynton, chaplain in 1406, left his body to be buried in the chapel of the Blessed Mary, within the cemetery of the church of Chelmsford, near the tomb of Sir John Mountney, his former master. Adrian Typpling, in 1506, makes mention of "the chappell of our ladie standing in the churchyard of Shelmysforde." Henry Hulsted, clerk in 1522, desired to be buried in the churchyard "ner our lady chapell."

It was by no means unusual in medieval days to find a separate chapel in a parish churchyard. They occasionally seem to have had their origin in the desire of wealthy people to found a distinctive chantry for their family, when the better positions in the parish church had already been appropriated ; but they were doubtless also intended to supply (in a crypt) an ossuary for the bones so frequently thrown up in the reused church-

yards. The cases of Yarmouth, Newark, Sudbury (Suffolk), and Crich (Derbyshire), may be cited from among two or three score of instances where church-yard chapels are known to have existed.

To the 1549 certificate of this chantry is the following interesting note: "Memorandum: the said towne of Chelmysford is a verie Greate populus and a markett Towne, havinge in yt to the number of viij^c (800) of howselling¹ people [communicants] and more."

The second chantry or gild priest served the gild of Corpus Christi, whose chapel was on the south side of the chancel within the church. According to the 1545 certificate, he was called the Morrow Mass priest—that is to say, he celebrated the first or early Mass, intended chiefly for travellers setting out on journeys, and for servants. Such Masses were usual in all towns in medieval England; they were generally celebrated at four o'clock in the summer, and at five o'clock in the winter. The income was returned at £9 7s. 8d. There was a sum of 12s. 8d. paid yearly for the use of seventeen and a half dozen of pewter vessels, and 3s. for two dozen candlesticks, which were evidently required for the gild feast. The hire of these, with other necessary deductions, such as 5s. 11d. for tithe, brought the clear annual value down to £7 18s. 1d.

The more extended notice of this chantry, or gild, in 1549 states that the lands and tenements pertaining to it were:—

"put in feoffament by diverse persons to the intent that the Wardens of the Guilde their, commonly callid our Morrowe masse Guilde, other wise callide Corpus Christi Guilde in Chelmysforde aforeseid, shulde finde a priest to singe Masse ther at the alter callid corpus chriti Alter, & to helpe serve the Cure their. Ande one Sir Thomas Eve, clerk, of the age of 40 yeres & more, literate, and of good usage and conversacion, & is benefysed to the yerely valewe of Fyve powndes

¹ The houseling age was sixteen. To obtain an average total population it is necessary to add about forty to every hundred of houseling folk, thus giving the Chelmsford population of that date as *circa* 1150.

out of the late dissolved Collidge of plasshye,¹ And teachith a Scole in chelmysford aforeseid, is nowe Incumbent thereof."

The yearly value is entered at £8 15s. 6d., from which a deduction had to be made of 16s. 8d. for rent. Hence the clear income "to the Kinges majesties use" stood at £7 18s. 10d.

A somewhat later certificate, giving full particulars of the property of this chantry, specifies that it held "a stall voc' Fishe stalle in market," worth 6s. 8d. a year.

The third chantry was that of Our Lady within the parish church. The certificate of 1545 says:

"The said preist doth say dyvine service within the parish churche aforeseid, in which parish ben to the nombre of viij^c hoselyng people and above and is a market toun and also a Great Thoroughfare for the Kynges people."

The certificate of 1549 gives the annual value of this chantry as £3 3s. 10d. The priest had to say Mass at the altar of Our Lady, and "to helpe serve the cure." It had been vacant for a year. The particulars of this small endowment are erased in the somewhat later certificate, as the property had been already sold by the Crown to Thomas Mildmay.

The fourth chantry was that of St. John Baptist. When the report of 1545 was drawn up, it was only worth £1 13s. 4d., namely, 20s. from "a tenement called Hulk otherwyse the Grehond in the hamlet of Mulsham," and another tenement at Chelmsford, worth 13s. 4d., where the priest was wont to dwell. But besides this there had been various copyhold lands and tenements, held under Thomas Mildmay, of his manor of Moulsham, worth £7 1s. 10d. a year, which had been seized by Mildmay about three years past, divers causes of forfeiture being alleged. Hence the service of this chantry was void, and there was no priest.

The certificate of 1549 states that the gild of St. John found a priest to say Mass at the altar of St. John, "and

¹ The Essex collegiate church of Pleshey, founded in 1394, was dissolved, under Henry VIII.'s Act of Suppression, in October, 1546.

also to helpe serve the Cure their"; it had been vacant some years, and its annual value declared at £1 13s. 4d. The details of the somewhat later certificate are erased, and the words "sold to Thomas Myldemay" added.

The returns of 2 Edward VI., generally known as Chantry Certificates, included obits, which were also confiscated to the Crown under the specious plea of being "superstitions." The obit was an annual commemoration of the departed, and is popularly supposed to have consisted solely in a Mass on the anniversary of the death-day. But this is a complete mistake. The small endowments, or rent-charges, securing a specific annual sum for the observance of the obit, were invariably—so far as we have been able to investigate the matter in various counties—shared between the poor of the parish and the celebrant priest, the former in fully 90 per cent. of the known instances obtaining the larger share. This fact at once stamps the suppression of obits as a grievous robbery of the community by Edward VI. and his Council, done under the hypocritical guise of stamping out Masses for the dead. Had this been the genuine object, the portion allotted to the poor would have been spared, instead of the whole of it being emptied into the royal coffers.

There were few parishes in England wherein the piety of our ancestors had not provided for one or more of these memorial obits. The Essex Commissioners were able to seize on seventeen obits in the populous parish of Chelmsford. These obits varied in annual value from 2s. 4d. to 13s. 4d. The total income they produced was £6 16s. 6d.; out of this sum £4 5s. 2d. was definitely assigned for distribution among the poor on the respective anniversaries, leaving only £2 11s. 4d. as the share of the celebrating priest.

Chelmsford School, known as "King Edward VI. Grammar School," is one of a numerous class up and down the country, the nomenclature of which has succeeded in filling the popular mind with an entirely false estimate as to the promotion of education by the youthful king and his Council. The actual facts of the case are exactly the reverse of the usual popular notion.

A recent most competent authority has amply justified the true title that he has assigned to Edward VI. as the "Spoiler of Schools."¹ "This poor, rickety, over-educated boy, who was only sixteen when he died, was not responsible for either the good or the evil that was done in his time. Edward VI. means first the Protector Somerset, then Dudley Duke of Northumberland, and under them Paget, Sir Walter Mildmay, Lord Chancellors Audley and Rich, and others." With this qualification, it may be plainly but concisely said that Edward VI. did not, in point of fact, found a single Grammar School. The great majority of Grammar Schools that were in working order (about 300 in number) when Edward VI. came to the throne were by him abolished or crippled, and out of their ruins a comparatively small number were refounded.

This was the case at Chelmsford. The absurdly misnamed "Edward VI. Grammar School" was not "founded" until the Crown had first confiscated two old local chantry endowments, which, as we have just seen, dealt with local education, one of them (the Mountney Chantry), whose priest was the Master of Chelmsford "grammer scole," having been founded as early as 1375. It thus appears that the Grammar School of the county town of Essex is of seven years' earlier foundation than that of Winchester College. Whether the priest of the Corpus Christi gild, who "teacheth a Scole in Chelmysford," was an usher in the Grammar School, or whether there was a severed and independent school, cannot now be ascertained with certainty, but the former supposition is the more probable.

The commissioners under the Chantries Act for the continuance of schools found that "a grammar school hath been continually kept in Chelmsford with the revenues of the last chantry of Our Lady, otherwise called Mountney's Chantry," and that it was "very mete and necessary to continue it." The Court of Augmentations was therefore ordered to pay Peter Wyleigh and his successors a fixed salary of £9 1s. yearly. The school income from the other chantry was altogether

¹ *English Schools at the Reformation*, by Arthur F. Leach (1896).

suppressed. On February 10, 1551, the formal refoundation of the Chelmsford Free Grammar School was enacted, with four governors as a corporation—namely, Sir William Peter, Sir Walter Mildmay, and Sir Henry Tirrell, knights, and Thomas Mildmay, esquire. It was not re-endowed with its own property, but with that of other dissolved chantries and guilds in Great Beddow, Ulting, and East Tilbury.¹

THE CHURCH OF CHELMSFORD (*continued*).

The serious damage done to this church by a storm in early Elizabethan days has generally escaped notice.

"The 16 of July, 1565, about nine of the clocke at night, began a tempest of lightning and thunder, with showers of haile, which continued till three of the clocke the next morning, so terrible that at Chelmsford, in Essex, 500 acres of corne were destroyed; the glasse windowes on the east side of the town, and of the west and south sides of the Church were beaten downe, with also the tiles of their houses; beside diverse barnes, chimnies, and the battlements of the church, which were overthrowne."²

It is currently supposed that the due observance of Sunday was very laxly observed in the time of Charles I., and that ordinances to the contrary were not put in force until the Puritans were in power under the Commonwealth. This is, however, a considerable mistake, and the contrary is shown to be the case in almost all parts of the country wherever ecclesiastical or civil documents are extant. Thus, in the court books of the arch-deaconry of Essex a man was presented at Chelmsford on June 10, 1628, for "travailing with his dragg [a heavy harrow] the 30th of April last, being the Saboth daye." At the same court at Chelmsford others were presented for being absent from church once a fortnight, and sometimes once a month; for having company in his house, drinking, at the time of Divine service; and for

¹ For the story of this school, see vol. ii., pp. 510-514, of *Victoria History of County of Essex*.

² Stow's *Annals* (1617), p. 568.

“rayling upon his neighbors in the Churchyard, after service.”

An entry in certain archidiaconal records of the year 1630 states, with regard to this church, that those seated at the west end of the chancel by the wardens were to pay 6s. 8d. each, whilst the women in the three upper seats on the south side of the chancel were to pay 3s. 4d. each.

An entry among the same papers of the year 1633 is to the following effect: “Received by Churchwardens [of Chelmsford] when the Corps of the old Countes of Warwick were carried through the Town, 6s. 8d.” This claim was made in accordance with a very old custom not infrequently made both in pre-Reformation and post-Reformation days, of offering Christian burial to any corpse carried through a parish, and, if this was refused, a burial fee could be legally demanded by the proper officials.

During the time of the prelude to the Commonwealth a vast number of polemical tracts and news-letters were issued from the press, chiefly on the side of the “Sectaries.” One Bruno Ryves, then beneficed at Stanwell, Middlesex (who afterwards became Dean of Windsor), put forth nineteen weekly numbers, beginning in August, 1642, of the “*Mercurius Rusticus*; or the Countie’s Complaint of the Barbarous Outrages committed by the Sectaries of this late-flourishing Kingdom.” The third number was concerned with the outrages at Chelmsford. It thus opens:

“We are now at Chelmsford, which is the Shire-town, and hath in it two thousand Communicants; all these are Parishioners of one and the same Church, for there is but one Church in this great Town, whereof at this time Doctor Michelson is Parson, an able and godly man. Before this Parliament was called, of this numerous Congregation there was not one to be named, Man or Woman, that boggled at the Common Prayers, or refused to receive the Sacrament kneeling, the posture which the Church of England (walking in the footsteps of venerable Antiquity) hath by Act of Parliament enjoined all those which account it their happiness to be

called her Children. But since this magnified Reformation was set on foot, this Town is so filled with Sectaries, especially Brownists and Anabaptists, that a third part of the People refuse to communicate in the Church-Lyturgie, and half refuse to receive the Blessed Sacrament, unless they may receive it in what posture they please to take it."

Ryves then proceeds to relate that in August, 1641, an Order was issued by the House of Commons for the taking away of "Scandalous Pictures" out of churches, with the result that the churchwardens took out of "a goodly fair window" at the east end of the chancel, "in which was painted the History of Christ from his Conception to his Ascension," the pictures of the Blessed Virgin and of Christ on the Cross, supplying the places with clear glass, but leaving other figures and the names of benefactors who had contributed in the fifteenth century to the building of the church. But a mob of sectaries determined to carry the matter further, and on the evening of November 5 of that year, in a riotous manner, with long poles and stones, beat down the whole of the glass. On the following Sunday the rector, Dr. Michelson, preached against this outrage, which so inflamed the sectaries that the most of them resorted to violence:

"A young Clothier, with others possessed with the same frenzy, came into the Church immediately after Divine Service was ended, laid violent hands upon the Doctor, took him by the Throat, and would have torn his Surplis off his Back, and were so inraged that had not some of his honest peacable Parishioners come to his rescue, they had in all probability endangered his Life. But when they could not wound with their hands they cut with their tongues as with a sharp Razor: They reviled him and call him Baals Priest, and Popish Priest for wearing the Rags of Rome."

The majority of the town were, however, indignant with this blasphemous conduct; but in June, July, and August, 1642, the Sectaries were much encouraged by the coming to Chelmsford of the Parliamentary forces raised in Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk. As each company

was raised it was sent to Chelmsford as the general rendezvous, and there tarried till the numbers reached three or four hundred, when they proceeded to London. During this time Dr. Michelson was at the mercy of the soldiers, "who, egged on by the Brownists and Anabaptists of the town, used his House as their quarters, consumed his provisions for his Family, and commanded them as Lords."

Three detailed instances of profane and gross outrages accompanied by violence towards the rector are next set forth, and eventually he was forced to forsake his charge, "leaving his wife and eight children to the mercy of the rebels, who have deprived his family of all their Livelihood, and exposed them to extream want."¹

The Library of Lambeth Palace contains a most interesting series of ecclesiastical documents of the time of the Commonwealth. In pursuance of various ordinances of the Parliament, a complete survey of all benefices was made in 1650 by specially appointed commissioners. These returns are bound up in twenty-one large folio volumes. Those relative to Essex are contained in the eighth volume; the portion pertaining to Chelmsford parish covers pp. 173-185.

An inquisition was held at the Black Boy, Chelmsford, on September 1, 1650, before Isaac Alleyne, John Guy, Peter Whettcombe, John Hare, and John Sorrell, Esqs., Commissioners, when evidence was received on oath as to the true yearly value of "all parsonages and vicarages, presentative and all ecclesiasticall and spirituall benefices, lyvings, and donations within the hundreds of Chelmsforde, Romforde, and Dengie, to the intent and purpose that provision may be had and made both for preaching and the maintenance of preaching Ministers," according to an Act of Parliament of June 8, 1644. The following is the return as to Chelmsford:

"That there is within the said Parish one Parsonage and Viccarage presentative. That Marke Mott, Clerke, is possessor of the said Parsonage and Viccarage appointed by the Parliament, and receives the proffitts

¹ *Mercurius Rusticus* (ed. 1605), pp. 25-31.

of them and dischargeth the Cure. That the yearly value of the Tythes of the said parish and halfe the Tythes of the Hamblett of Moulsham are one hundred pounds. And the parsonage house and thirteen Acres of Lands, the Vicarage, and other tenements thereto belonging, are worth thirty pounds per annum. That the said Marke Mott doth performe and supply the Cure and was putt in by the Appointment of the Parliament as abovesaid, and hath for his paines all the Tythes and Gleabe, paying to Doctor Michellson the fifth part of the lyving from whome it was Sequestered. That the Right of presentation is in S^r Henry Mildmaye, alias Lord FitzWalters. That the said Marke Mott is an able preaching Minister."

The celebrated indulgence whereby Charles II. and his Council sanctioned the suspension of the penal laws against the Nonconformists, and the licensing of places of worship and of approved ministers was passed by the Council and ordered to be published on March 14, 1672. The strength of Nonconformity in the county is shown by the number of licenses issued. The total of buildings licensed for Nonconformist services, or where Nonconformist ministers resided, throughout Essex amounted to 89. Of these, 73 were Presbyterian, 12 Congregational, 1 Baptist, 1 Presbyterian and Congregational, and 2 undefined. The actual number of licensed ministers in Essex was 55, of which total 42 were Presbyterian, 12 Congregational, and 1 Baptist. Among the earlier applications was that of John Reeve, M.A., of Chelmsford, for a license for himself as a minister, and for the use of his house, known by the sign of the King's Head, as a meeting-house for Presbyterians. These licenses were granted him on May 9. It will be remembered, however, that this indulgence was short-lived. Owing to the action of Parliament, the indulgence was withdrawn on March 7, 1673, the king breaking with his own hand the impression of the Great Seal attached to it.

Morant, the historian of Essex, writing in 1768, gives a brief and somewhat meagre description of the actual fabric of the parish church of Chelmsford. He says

little more than that it was a stately building, with north and south leaded aisles to both church and chancel, and a lofty square tower at the west end. His history has for nearly a century and a half maintained its position as the standard work descriptive of the whole county, though it is now being replaced by the comprehensive scheme of the Victoria County Histories, of which two of the Essex volumes have been already published. There is, however, another comprehensive but inferior history of the county by Mr. P. Muilman, now almost forgotten, which was issued two years after that by Morant. Nevertheless, Muilman gives a more detailed account of the parish church as he found it in 1770. He describes it as :

“A noble structure, with three spacious aisles, which run to the end of the chancel and are leaded. A stately square tower, built of stones, stands at the west end, with proper pyramids at each corner. Upon it is erected a light gentile spire, which is likewise leaded and has rather a pretty effect. It has a ring of six bells, a clock, and a set of chimes. It is said to have had a peal of eight bells, but that the parishioners gave two of them to Writtle in exchange for their chimes, which were accordingly brought here. The body of the church is supported by pillars of a light construction, yet of excellent workmanship. The pews are much decayed and the floor is but indifferent. The windows are Gothic and curious.”

Mr. Muilman makes mention of two vestries, one for the clergyman and another for the transaction of parish business. He also states that on one side of the tower, evidently within the church itself, was a place in which were kept two fire-engines for the benefit of the town and parish. The fire-engines of those days were of a small and primitive character. It was the usual custom, as far back as Elizabethan days, to keep various appliances for checking fires at the west end of parish churches ; such as leather buckets, ladders, and great fire-hooks for pulling off thatch or dragging down burning material. When engines first came into use, they were generally stored in the like place.

A further paragraph from this 1770 account is worth citing ; it states that :

"The registrar's office for the transaction of ecclesiastical business is over the great porch door, under the window of which is an ancient carved nyche, that seems to have contained some curious pieces of sculpture. On the north and south sides of the belfry, in places separated from the body of the church by deal partitions, are the twelve apostles painted on wood ; they seem to be antique, and are not despicable in point of figure or drapery. Several of them are still remaining perfect, though some are defaced or otherwise damaged."

It is highly probable that this old array of carved and painted figures had originally formed the front of the rood-loft.

Just at the dawn of the nineteenth century a serious calamity befell the parish church of Chelmsford. This catastrophe was the result of that pernicious practice of burying persons of any distinction within churches, instead of committing them to the earth in churchyards. In addition to the grave sanitary evils of such a system, the practice not infrequently endangered the safety of the fabric. The partial subsidence of many a church arcade both in town and country, which has found work for builders and architects, within our own recollection, has been brought about through the careless construction of burying vaults. Such operations have occasionally resulted in the complete overthrow of church fabrics; within a few days of the Chelmsford catastrophe, a similar accident happened from the like cause to the parish church of Wingrave, Buckinghamshire. On January 17, 1800, some workmen were engaged in opening a vault between two of the pillars that separated the south aisle from the nave for the interment of a lady of the local family of Tindal. In accomplishing this they got below the somewhat shallow foundations of the arcade, with the result that the same evening, about ten o'clock, there came about an appalling crash, and within a few seconds almost the whole of the body of the great church was a heap of ruins. The south arcade collapsed, and in its fall drew with it the roofs of the nave

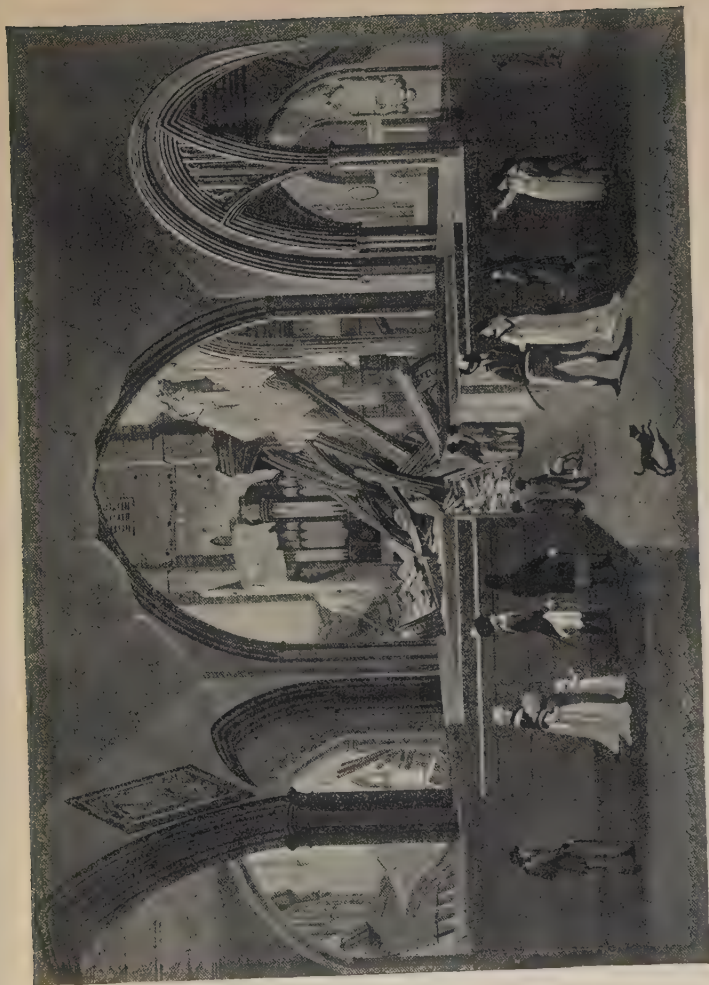


Photo by Fred. Spalding, Chelmsford.

INTERIOR OF CHELMSFORD CHURCH, LOOKING WEST, AFTER THE DOWNFALL OF 1800.

To face p. 45

and aisles. The lofty clerestory on the south side, of course, disappeared, whilst large portions of that on the north side also fell. The parts that remained standing were the great western tower, the chancel, with its side aisles or chapels, and the two-storied south porch, although the last named was somewhat damaged.

The account given in the *Gentleman's Magazine* says that "the organ escaped unhurt, though the gallery before it was beaten down, and the monuments, with the library in the north aisle, are safe."

It may here be remarked that this organ was built in 1772, by Crang and Hancock, and was for a long period esteemed to be by far the best in the county of Essex. It was rebuilt by Messrs. Hill and Son in 1864, and was then moved from the west gallery to the north transept.

It has generally been stated that the necessary rebuilding and repairs of this church were accomplished by special Act of Parliament, but this is a complete mistake. After local efforts had been exhausted, although a fairly considerable sum was raised, it was decided to resort to the then usual custom in almost all catastrophes—to a general collection by brief. Briefs were Letters Patent issued by the Crown directing the collection of alms in churches or from house to house for special objects. A statute was passed to regulate their issue in the time of Queen Anne, by which it was ordered that briefs could only be issued out of Chancery at the request of Quarter Sessions, before which court the cause had to be established on petition, and, if necessary, supported by oath. But abuses still continued. There was much unwillingness to contribute to these reiterated appeals, as it became known that by far the larger part of the money gathered adhered to the hands of the official collectors. There were ninety-seven briefs issued for churches between 1805 and 1818. The estimate of the money required was £125,240; but of this sum only £35,857 was collected, and actually only £14,297 of the amount collected was handed over as net proceeds. At last briefs realized little more than 6d. per parish towards the object desired, and they were finally abolished in 1828.

Among the collections of original church briefs in the British Museum we have found the one which passed Quarter Sessions on behalf of this church.

A brief was issued, dated July 20, 1801, for obtaining funds, wherein it is set forth that the humble petition of the minister, churchwarden, and principal inhabitants of Chelmsford, as certified by the justices at Quarter Sessions in July, 1800, stated that the parish church was in "a very ruinous condition, the roof and south aisle thereof and part of the north aisle having fallen down, whereby it is rendered incapable of having Divine service performed therein; also the gallery and many of the pews are destroyed."

The truth of this was testified not only by the inhabitants and justices, but also by the oath of "John Johnson, Esquire, an able and experienced architect," who, after careful viewing, estimated that, on a moderate computation, the cost of repairing and repewing would be £3,600. It was further stated that the inhabitants, being mostly tenants at rack rents and greatly burdened with poor rates, were "incapable of undertaking so great a work without the assistance of well-disposed Christians."

The local architect mentioned in this brief was the designer, a few years earlier, of both the Shire Hall and the County Gaol. Services were held whilst the church was dismantled in the upper room of the Shire Hall.

The church was not reopened for worship until September, 1803. The scheme for rebuilding, considering the period when it was accomplished, entitles Mr. Johnson to some degree of praise. Every effort seems to have been made to re-use as much as possible of the old fabric, whilst the new work was executed on Gothic lines instead of being disfigured with an amalgam of classic details such as might naturally have been expected. The clerestory of the nave was the least effective part of the new work, and the elaborate roof of plaster-work design, which was doubtless considered very fine at the time of its execution, has lasted fairly well for upwards of a century. It was just at this time that Coade's terra-cotta works were coming into fashion,



Photo by Fred. Spalding, Chelmsford.

CHELMSFORD CHURCH, INTERIOR, 1803.

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and Mr. Johnson made excellent use of this material, which was by no means to be depised when there was a difficulty in obtaining stone. It will be noticed, in a careful examination of the present church, that the mullions and tracery of the windows of the south aisle are of this material, and were doubtless fairly well copied from the original stonework. The arcades of the slender piers on the north side of the nave are the original stonework; on the south side, the old stone vases and capitals have been re-used, but the piers themselves are terra-cotta. Certain curious notches and cuttings will be noticed in the stone vases of the piers on this side; they were caused by finding places for the supports of the side galleries, which were removed in 1873.

Coade's terra-cotta or "artificial stone" ware was established at Lambeth in 1769. The works and show-rooms were in Narrow Wall Street, and are described in Pennant's *Account of London*, first published in 1790. He says: "The statue, the vase, the urn, the rich chimney-pieces, and, in a few words, everything which could be produced out of natural stone or marble by the most elegant chisel, is here to be obtained at an easy rate. Proof has been made of its durable quality. A beautiful font, the ornament of Dibden Church, Essex, formed on a most admirable antique model, . . . is the admiration of every person of taste." In Lambert's *Survey of London* (iv. 158), published in 1808, it is stated that "the preparation is cast in moulds and burnt. . . . It is possessed of the peculiar property of resisting frost, and consequently it retains that sharpness in which it excels every species of sculpture in stone, and even equals marble."

The general effect of this Coade terra-cotta is undoubtedly inferior to stone, but its wear at Chelmsford for more than a century amply sustains its claim to durability.

It may here be noticed that the beautiful south porch was somewhat damaged when the body of the church collapsed. It is probable that the clumsy brick entrance to the upper story of the porch, usually known by the

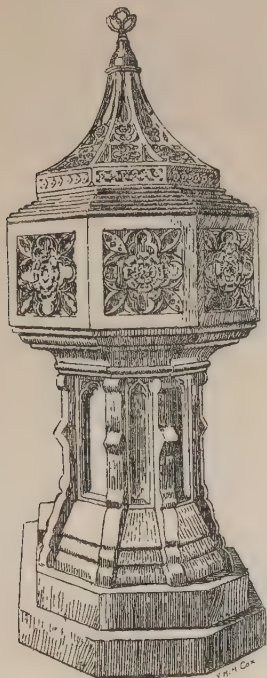
misapplied name of "parvis," which was originally entered from the church itself, was at this time constructed. This outer entrance much disfigured the west side of the porch. This brick stairway was removed in 1884 by Mr. Chancellor, when, at his own cost, he so handsomely restored the porch to its former dignity. The beautifully carved and panelled ceiling of the porch itself was at that time again exposed and put into a state of repair. A suitable stairway entrance to the upper room was at that time constructed within the church, to the west of the main doorway.

This upper room, which was probably used originally for the safe-keeping of the more valuable of the church goods, was afterwards used, as we know from the church accounts, for the storage of the armour or harness pertaining to the musters bound to be provided by the town. After the Restoration, it was used as the office of the registrar of the archdeaconry, and thus continued until the room was restored to church use. It now serves as the appropriate receptacle for the Knightbridge Library, which used to be stored in the north aisle.

John Knightbridge was born at Chelmsford in 1620. He took his B.A. degree at Wadham College, Oxford, in 1642. Leaving Oxford when the town was about to be besieged, he subsequently became fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge, on the expulsion of the royalist fellows in 1645. After resigning his fellowship in 1659, he became rector of Spofforth, Yorkshire. He took his D.D. degree in 1673, and died in 1677. In accordance with his expressed wish, his books were given, in 1679, to the church of his birthplace, to be at the service of the clergy of the district. Dr. Knightbridge's books still retain the old sheepskin bindings. They are mainly theological and largely foreign; there are 130 folio volumes, and about 280 quarto or octavo. Fifteen date from Elizabeth's reign, but by far the largest portion are of the Commonwealth period (1549-1659). Many of the latter bear the signature of Lazarus Seaman, who was the Puritan master of Peterhouse. He died in 1675.

At the time of the downfall of the church the old octagon font, of good design, and doubtless of 1424 date,

was broken to pieces. Mr. Johnson, the architect, caused this design to be faithfully reproduced in light-coloured terra-cotta. Some few years ago it was somewhat rashly decided to accept the gift of a costly but cumbersome font of foreign marbles. It was designed by the late Mr. Street, R.A., but it may fairly be said



TERRA-COTTA FONT, NOW IN ST. PETER'S, CHELMSFORD.

that the celebrated architect was on this occasion by no means successful in his design. Moreover, it is of a thirteenth-century style, and harmonizes with nothing whatever in the fabric. The terra-cotta font, an exceptionally interesting and historic example of good moulding of the beginning of the last century, was

contemptuously discarded. Happily, however, it was rescued from a builder's yard by Mr. Chancellor, and presented by him to the mission church of St. Peter's on the occasion of its erection by the Bishop of Colchester, in 1892. Subsequent to its translation, a canopied cover for the font was executed in the like material.

A remarkable detail of the interior of the church is the two lofty lockers at the west end in the masonry of the jambs of the great tower archway. These recesses are 2 feet 9 inches wide and 1 foot 6 inches deep, and the height is over 9 feet. These lockers were for a long time blocked up by the supports of the west gallery, but they have been opened out in recent years and refitted with new plain oak doors; the hinges are original. There can be little or no doubt that the use of these lockers was, in the main, for the storing of banners and banner staves used in processions, and perhaps, at a later date, for some of the paraphernalia in connexion with the miracle plays. At the top of these lockers or tall cupboards, there is a quatrefoil opening in the stonework to each of them, facing west. These openings, as Mr. Chancellor has ingeniously suggested, were for ventilation, which would be specially required if the banners had been used in wet weather for outdoor processions. These Chelmsford examples are the largest banner-stave lockers to be met with in England. They always occur at the west end of churches, and are chiefly to be found in the East Anglian and Northamptonshire churches.¹

THE MONUMENTS.

Considering the size and importance of this church, there is a distinct paucity of early monumental remains. Close to the outside of the west of the tower, embedded in the asphalt of the footway, is a coffin slab or cover, of the usual early tapering shape. The carving on the

¹ A list of twenty-six examples and two illustrations are given in *English Church Furniture*, 1907, one of Methuen's series of Antiquary's Books.

surface is almost obliterated, but it is certainly far older than any part of the fabric now standing, and is probably of eleventh or twelfth century date.

The most remarkable monument now in Chelmsford church is that which commemorates Thomas Mildmay, his wife Avice, and their numerous children. It is erected against the east wall of the north chapel or transept, and is now much obscured by the organ. Thomas Mildmay held office under Henry VIII. and Edward VI. as an auditor of the Court of Augmentation, which gave him great opportunities, at the time of the suppression of the monasteries, of amassing a considerable fortune. He became possessed of the manor of Bishop's Hall, in Chelmsford and Moulsham, as well as of large estates and ecclesiastical patronage in other parts of Essex. His descendants so materially increased that, according to Morant, the family had developed into nine distinct branches within the limits of this county. Thomas Mildmay died about 1550, and his eldest son, of the same name, married Avice, daughter of William Gunson, of London, by whom he had eight sons and seven daughters. He was sheriff of Essex in 1558. Avice Mildmay of the monument was buried, as we know from the parish registers, on October 5, 1557, and nine years after, on September 25, 1566, her husband was buried.

Dame Avice Mildmay was interred with much pomp, as we know from an entry in Martyn's *Diary* :—

"The v day of October (1557) was buried at Chelmsford in Essex the wyff of Master Thomas Myldmay, squwyre and audetor, with ij whyf branchys, and ij dosen of grett staffe torchys, and iiij dosen of skochyons, and many mornars in blake."

This noteworthy, and in many respects beautifully wrought, mural monument has the front portion divided into three compartments, separated and flanked by classical pilasters, the whole rising from a richly carved base, whilst delicately traced ornament is admirably treated on the upper entablature and in the panels above it. The stiff flat panelling of the upper part, with a somewhat clumsily-shaped finial terminating in a ball,

is of coarser and inferior workmanship to the really exquisite foliage work in low relief of the original monument; for, as Mr. Chancellor has so well pointed out in his noble work on *The Ancient Sepulchral Monuments of Essex* (1890), the monument is obviously of two dates and executed by very different hands. It seems probable that Thomas Mildmay caused the beautiful tomb to be worked to his wife's and to his own future memory immediately on her death, in 1557; and that his son had the bad taste, five years after his father's death (for the date 1571 is very conspicuous), to add the upper portion to enclose an epitaph to both his parents.

The centre compartment of the front of the original tomb bears the arms of Mildmay—Per fesse nebuly argent and sable, three greyhounds' heads couped, counter-changed, collared, gules studded or—surmounted by crest and mantling. In the dexter compartment, beneath two semicircular canopies, are the small kneeling effigies of Avice Mildmay and her seven daughters; whilst in the sinister compartment, under like canopies, kneel the effigies of Thomas Mildmay and his eight sons.

The stilted Latin epitaph above is as follows:

“Sculptus adest Thomas Mildmaius, sculptaque coniux
Avicia, ast intus molliter ossa cubant.
Armiger ille fuit clarus, fuit hæc Gulielmi
Filia Gunsoni, flos, decus, armigeri.
Chara, tori, ter quinque vide sua pignora, fausti
Partus sunt septem fæminei, octo mares.
Mille et quingentis, a partu Virginis, annos
Septem, quinque quater, ter dabis atque decem;
Tum decima sexta Septembris luce redibat
Avicia in cineres, quæ cinis ante fuit,
Anno, post obitum, nono, decimoque calendas
Octobris, Thomam mors inimica ferit.”

The following vigorous prose translation was given some years ago in “The Gentleman's History of Essex,” correcting the date, which had been wrongly calculated:

“Here are seen graven the effigies of Thomas Mildmay and Avice his wife, but within their remains lie in peace. He was a renowned esquire, she a daughter and lovely branch of William Gunson, Esq., and they had fifteen pledges of their prosperous love; seven

whereof were females, eight were males. Afterwards, in the year of our Lord 1557, and in the morning on the 16th day of September, Avice returned to that dust from whence she originally sprung, and on the 10th day of the calends of October, in the ninth year following, the unrelenting king of terrors triumphed over Thomas."

The eldest son of Thomas and Avice was Sir Thomas Mildmay, knighted by Queen Elizabeth. He was twice sheriff of the county, and represented Essex in the Parliament of 1571, the year when he completed the Chelmsford monument. Sir Thomas Mildmay, together with his brother Walter, Sir William Petre, and Sir Henry Tyrell, were the first four governors of the revived Chelmsford Grammar School of 1551. Sir Thomas had the honour of entertaining Queen Elizabeth at Moulsham Hall during her progress of 1579. He died in 1608, and was buried in Bonham church.

This Sir Thomas's eldest son was Sir Thomas Mildmay of Moulsham, created baronet in 1611. Moulsham Hall was the principal seat of the family for nearly three centuries ; it was sold and pulled down in 1809.

Against the north wall of the north chancel aisle or chapel is an immense monument, about 15 feet high by 9 feet broad, executed by John Lovell, consisting of two Corinthian columns flanking a large urn, with a mourning cherub on each side. It is entirely executed in marble, and is a fine example of this kind of classical monument. The long inscription on the pedestal states that it is to the memory of Benjamin Mildmay, Earl Fitzwalter, "who having many years served his King and his country in several great Offices of State with dignity and integrity, died February 29th, 1756, aged 86." He was created Earl Fitzwalter and Viscount Harwich in 1730, but dying without issue, left his estates to his nearest male relative, William Mildmay, who erected the monument. Earl Fitzwalter was descended from Sir Walter Mildmay, fourth son of the first Sir Thomas Mildmay, of Chelmsford and Moulsham.

The north chancel aisle was formerly, from the days of Elizabeth, the chief burial-place of the Mildmay family. The late Archdeacon Mildmay compiled a list of members of the family buried in this vault or within

the precincts of the church. The names, numbering forty-one, extending in date from 1544 to 1796, are engraved on a mural brass plate in this aisle.

Against the south wall of the south chancel chapel is



MONUMENT TO MATTHEW RUDD AND FAMILY, 1615.

a singular small mural monument bearing the following epitaph :

“ In obitum Mathei Rudd generosi, qui
Mortem obiit Anno Domini 1615
Et ætatis suæ 60.

“ Thus death triumphs and tells us all must die,
Thus wee triumph to Christ by death to flie.
To live, to die is not to die but live,
To die to bliss is blessed life to give.
Oh bless me then, oh strike me at the harte,
Breath out my life and let my soule departe.
Aske how he liv'd and thou shalt know his end,
He died a saint to God, to poore a freind.”

This tablet consists of a black marble centre in an alabaster frame. The upper part of the slab has a most singular engraving of a man, with his two sons behind him, facing his wife with her three daughters. Between them, standing on a draped table, is Death,

represented as a skeleton with a dart in each hand and over his head a label bearing the words : *Veni, Vidi, Vici*.

There is a somewhat remarkable mural slab over the south doorway within the porch, which has reference to the use of the room over the porch as the registrar's office :

"Near the foot of these stairs lyes the body of James Lucas, N.P. [Notary Public], who for many years was the Deputy Register of these Offices, and carried on the Trust thereby reposed with credit and honour, and settled the same as above at his own expence. He dyed y^e 8th of March, 1759, aged 64. Here also lieth Mary his wife, who died Sept. 24th, 1766, aged 66."

PARISH BOOKS AND REGISTERS.

Chelmsford church possesses an exceptionally valuable parochial record, which is securely kept in the safe with the registers. This remarkable volume of churchwardens' accounts is bound in leather, and was originally fastened by a brass clasp. The book measures 12½ inches by 8 inches, and is 3 inches thick. It consists of 410 paper folios, and extends from the year 1557 to 1668. There are, however, some notes on the last page as late as 1681, connected with the choice, in Christmas week, of a surveyor for the township of Moulsham. Within the book itself there are entries to the effect that 1s. was paid for three quires of paper "to make this book," and 6d. was paid to Mr. Peters for binding the same.

This great book contains many entries of local interest, such as the elections of church officers, the incidence of rating, the collection of rates and of voluntary contributions, the gathering of brief moneys, etc., with which we have here no concern; but the highly important inventories and other statements that tell of the condition and extent of church goods and ornaments, and of the uses to which the church of Chelmsford was put at the close of the reign of Queen Mary and during the earlier part of that of Queen Elizabeth, are well worth citing.

A certain amount of church goods were disposed of

by the churchwardens at the beginning of Edward VI.'s reign, as is shown by the following return among the Domestic State Papers made to the first commission of that reign :—

"Geffrey Skotte and William Nooke, churchwardens, doo saye That they and Roger Platte, parishioners, solde as much mettall as they receaved xlviijs. vjd. with as many olde bordes as came to viijd., whiche money they have with more spente in wasshing the church with lyme and wrytinge of scripture about the church [and] with taking downe of ymages."

The Chelmsford return to the second commission of Edward VI., which would have contained an inventory of church goods, is not extant. This parochial book affords evidence that many of the old vestments, etc., were still in the church when Mary came to the throne ; it is also clear that much pertaining to the unreformed services was resupplied during that reign.

The following are the more noteworthy entries of the 1557-58 accounts, with brief explanatory notes as to the less usual terms :

Item the 14th day of December delivered to the vicar and churchwardens of Lytle Badow ij old vestments of blew damaske of and for one fayre antifoner¹ whiche we hade of theme.

Item payd to the Clokemaker of Westminster for makyng the cloke and altering the chimes iiij markes that is xiijs. iiijd. by Willm Wigdeworth and John Bridges and by the wardens of this accompte in full payment of the sayd iiij markes.

Item payd for a new printed Legend² to serve in the quyre.

Item payd for a hande bell for the Rogation dayes and to ring before the corses at their burials. - - - - - xiijs. viijd.
- - - - - iijs. ix d.

Item payed to the boke bynder of Yeng'stone [Ingatestone] at his coming to se our bokes vestments and copes to make certificat to my Lorde of London and the rest of the Commissioners in what order o' church goodes was in, geven to him for his Rewarde - ijs.

Item payd for makyng of our Ladis crowne at the high alter and for mending of her handes and payntyng of the angelles - ijs.

¹ The *Antiphonarium*, or Antiphoner, contained the anthems (*antiphonæ*) to the Psalms, the responds to the lessons, and the other occasional verses and responds throughout the services.

² The *Legenda*, or Legends, contained the long lessons used at mattins, as well from the Bible as from other sources, such as the *Passionale*, which embraced the acts of saints read on their festivals.

Item payd to Master Wallys of London for x^{li} and a quarter of new wax - - - - - vijs. vjd.

Item receyved of Roger Webbe iiij^{li} of wax which he did owe unto the parish, So that the hole Light of the Sepulchre¹ and pascall² was in value of wax at ester xvj^{li} a quarter and half quarter.

Item payd to Mr. William Mildmaye for vj els and a yard of bocrame to make ij Surplices for the churche agaynste ester vijs. xd.

Item payd to Bridges for iiij els of bokram to make ij Surplis for children agaynste Ester - - - - - iijs.

Item payd to Hervyes wife for making ij Surplis for men and ij for children ageynst Ester - - - - - ijs.

Item payd for watching the Sepulchre from good fryday none tyll ester day mornyng and for breade and drinke - - - - - xijd.

Item payd to the Ringers for ringing upon the ascension day and corpus christi daye as hath byn paid of olde Custome - - - - - viijd.

Item payd to Roger Webbe for stocking xvj^{li} of wax for the pascall and sepulcer light - - - - - xvjd.

Item payd for a boke of articles sett fourth by my Lord of London - - - - - iiijd.

Item payd to widow Pamplys for iiij yeardes of lynes for the organs - - - - - ijd.

Item for a bell rope for the treble bell waying vj^{li} - - - - - xix³/₄d.

Item for vij fadome of lyne for the cloke - - - - - vijd.

Item for a rope for the chimes waying xx^{li} - - - - - iijs. viijd.

Item payd for frankencense - - - - - v¹/₂d.

Item for iiij yeardes of tape to make gerdles for the vestmentes - - - - - iiijd.

Item for v plates to mende the case that the best crosse is caried in³ - - - - - iiijd.

Item payd at Puttes for y^e clarkes brekfast to helpe sing messe before the Justice - - - - - xiiijd.

Item payd to y^e clarke of Maxstoke for a reward when he came to us to offer his servyce - - - - - xvjd.

Item payd to y^e clarkes of Writell for to helpe syng messe before y^e Justis at y^e last assize - - - - - xviijd.

¹ The Easter sepulchre was a receptacle wherein the Blessed Sacrament was deposited from Good Friday to Easter morning. It was commonly set up in a richly decorated recess on the north side of the chancel, with candles burning before it in great numbers during the whole period. Watchers guarded the sepulchre continuously, mainly in imitation of the Roman soldiers at our Lord's tomb, but also partly for devotion and for guarding at night against fire.

² The Pascal candle, whose use can be traced back to the sixth century, was a great wax taper, standing before the altar, and lighted on Easter Eve; according to Sarum Use, it burned throughout the octave of Easter at mattins, Mass, and evensong.

³ The altar cross usually served also as a processional cross, the cross or crucifix being fitted with a foot to stand in as well as a staff for carrying it.

The accounts from Easter, 1558, to Easter, 1560, are entered in a collective form. The following are among the more interesting entries :

Item payede James Harvey for iiij ^{li} of wax, to make the Sepulchre lyght	-	-	-	-	-	iijs.
Item payed for cooles to hallowe the fyre on ester even ¹	-	-	-	-	-	ijd.
Item payed for meate and drynk for them that did watche the Sepulchre	-	-	-	-	-	xviijd.
Item payed to them that dyd helpe take down the Roode	-	-	-	-	-	ijd.
Item payed for takynge downe of the awters	-	-	-	-	-	ijs. iiijd.
Item payed to William Wythers for making a standarde for the sanc bell whele	-	-	-	-	-	ijs. viiij.
Item payed to hym for mendynge of a Stoppe for the great organ	-	-	-	-	-	iiij.
Item payed to hym for fetchynge the communion table for Mr. Olde Ayers and setting yt up in the chaunsell	-	-	-	-	-	iiij.

The Elizabethan injunction of 1559 with respect to altars has been often misunderstood, and more often misquoted, in an endeavour to prove the illegality of stone altars in the post-Reformation Church. It runs as follows :

“Whereas her majesty understandeth, that in many and sundry parts of the realms the altars of the churches be removed, and tables placed for the administration of the Holy Sacrament, according to the form of the law therefore provided ; and in some places, the altar be not yet removed, upon opinion conceived of some other order therein to be taken by her majesty’s visitors ; in the order whereof, saving for an uniformity, there seemeth no matter of great moment, so that the Sacrament be duly and reverently aministerd ; yet for observation of one uniformity through the whole realm, and for the better imitation of the law in that behalf, it is ordered that no altar be taken down, but by the oversight of the curate of the church and the churchwardens, or one of them at least, wherein no riotous or disordered manner to be used. And that the Holy Table in every church be decently made, and set in the place where the altar stood, and there commonly covered, as thereto belongeth.”

¹ The hallowing of the new fire on Easter Eve, from which the Pascal and other lights were kindled, was an important ceremony.

From this it is clear that the injunction permits but does not order the removal of stone altars. Stone altars remained in the chapels-royal and in several of the cathedrals. In 1626 a stone altar was again set up in Durham Cathedral, and at Worcester by the dean in 1634. In 1662 Bishop Hackett consecrated a stone altar at Foremark, Derbyshire. Instances of their revived use in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are quite common, as at Gotham, Notts, Canons Ashby, Northants, and a score or two of other examples.¹

The next group of accounts are those that extend from July 21, 1560, to the same date 1562. The following is the first entry :

Imprimis recayved of sartene of the parryshe whose names are mencioned in a rowle for the bying of a bybell and a parafrase to the use of the Churche the som of xxvijs. *vd.*

In these accounts there are a variety of entries for "thinges soulede" for small sums. They include several entries for "small pyleres," or pieces of carved timber, which probably pertained to the rood-loft; 3s. 4d. for an altar-stone; 12d. for an old chest; 2s. for a long torche chyst;² 6s. 8d. for a press (for vestments); 6s. 8d. for the table of St. George; 15s. 8d. for 65 lbs. of old brass; and 14s. for "sarten tymbar left of the rood-loft."

It^m payde to Robardes and Cokerton carpenters for iiij dayes worke abought the takyng downe of the nether part of the rode lofte at ijs. viij*d.* the daye - - - - - xs. viij*d.*

It^m paid to the goodman Sanden in Mowsam for a bybell xixs. iiij*d.*

It^m paid to Rychard Cary for a parafrase upon the gospels vjs. viij*d.*

It^m paid for ij psalters and a psalme bocke - - - vs.

It^m paid for the caredge of the oulde brasse to London viij*d.*

It^m paid to Drane the glasyer for defacyng of the glase windows accordyng to the queens injunctions - - - v*d.*

It^m paid for glasyng the same agane and all other places amended iiij*d.* vjs. viij*d.*

It^m paid for a paper of the comandementes and a kalender xv*d.*

¹ See Cox and Harvey's *English Church Furniture* (1907).

² *I.e.*, a chest containing the large torches, serges, or funeral tapers, made after a special fashion, mixed with resin. Such torches were provided by most parishes, and were lighted round the corpse in the church; they belonged to the churchwardens, and a fee was paid for their use.

It^m paid to William Wetheres for a deske and for makynge a bord
for the comandements - - - - - xvjd.

It^m paid to the rynggars when the quene cam throwe the towne
vjs. viiijd.

The setting up of the Ten Commandments in churches as a reminder to worshippers of the duty they owed to God and their neighbour was not unknown in the medieval Church of England, as is testified by more than one inventory and bequest ; but the general custom came in soon after Elizabeth's accession, in consequence of a letter from the Queen to the commissioners in matters ecclesiastical, in 1560, complaining of the desolate and unclean condition of many of the churches. They were ordered to see that tables of the Ten Commandments were set up in the churches, to be not only read for edification, but also "to give some comely ornament and demonstration that the same was a place of religion and prayer."

There are one or two examples of compliance with this order still extant. In the Lady Chapel of Ludlow church there is a board of "The X commandemens of almighty god," dated 1561, and painted after a much-abbreviated fashion in black letter within an ornamental border. The Norfolk churches of Aylmorton, Shipdham, and Gateley also possess Elizabethan tables of the Commandments ; in the last instance this table was formerly on the tympanum over the rood-screen. In the church of Lanteglos, South Cornwall, against the north wall are the Ten Commandments in black letter within a large square panel of wood : the initials are in red, and the whole is surrounded by a painted border. The spelling is quaint ; the sixth commandment reads, "Doe no murther." This is undated, but is doubtless early Elizabethan.

The following are a few other entries of the first half of Elizabeth's reign :

1569.

It ^m two Bookes for prayer	-	-	-	-	xijd.
It ^m for a lanthorne	-	-	-	-	xijd.
It ^m payd for a Bocke of prayers agaynste the Rebellyons ¹	-	-	-	-	xijd.
Itm. for a tableclothe of diaper for the Comunion table	-	-	-	-	vs.

¹ *I.e.*, the rebellion of the Earls of Westmorland and Northumberland.

1576.

Paide to Jones the carpenter the xxvj daye of March 1576 for findinge all y^e new tymber with his workemanshipp for y^e frame in the lantrone of the steple for to hange on the same bell with iij littel peces of tymber put in the walle whereon the spent of lead fell of - - - - - xvijs.

1580.

Payed to Boxford the xxviiij of apperell for ij boockes of prayers consarning the yerthquacke¹ to be Rede in the church Wednesdays and Frydays - - - - - viiij*d*.

In 1582, on the night following Maundy Thursday, the church was robbed, the three locks of the poor man's box broken open, and the contents taken, as well as the surplices and Communion cloth. They attempted to force the vestry, "but they prevayled not to have had the Communion Cup. Thanks be to God they myssed of that."

The first inventory of the church goods of Chelmsford in this book is entered under the date of July 21, 1560. The parish church was then in possession of the following :

Coopes.—Imprimis iij coopes of clothe of tysshewe—iij of redd velvet wyth daysyes—ij of blewe velvet—i of blacke velvet—j of redde satten—j of redde bawdken—j of blewe bawdken.

Vestments.—Imprimis j vestement with a decon of clothe of tysshewes—j of red velvet, with a decon and subdecon, with dayseyes—j of murrey velvet—j of blewe velvet with decon and subdecon—j of crymson satten deacon and subdeacon—j of blewe damaske with decon and subdecon—j of blewe baudeken—j old of black velvet with deacon and subdecon—j of blue velvet—j of redd damaske—j of whyght sursenet—j of green velvet—j of green satten of Brydges—j of red damaske with lyons of golde—j of red satten of Brydges—j of whyght fustyan—j of red damaske—ij of green baudekyn—j vestemente of St. Nicholas—j of blewe dornecke.

¹ An alarming earthquake occurred on April 6, 1580, throughout England; it was especially severe in London. Parts of St. Paul's and the Temple church were cast down, and two apprentices were killed at Christ Church by the fall of a stone. In addition to forms of public prayer to avert God's wrath, a form was also issued to be used by householders with their whole family every evening before going to bed.

Clothes belongynge to y^e high autler and the fonte of redd velvett.

Imprimis ij lecterne clothes of velvet—vj clothes of velvet—ij fruntletts of velvet for y^e autler—a red clothe of velvet—a canopie cloth of red satten of Brydges—ix old banner clothes, crosse clothes, and curtens togyther—x aulbes, iiij amyses, a curten of dorneckes and x stoles—a great carpet of Arras to lye befor y^e high autler—a lent clothe of lynnyn for y^e hygh alter, paynted with drops—a vayle clothe for Lent—j crosse clothe painted to hang before rode in Lent.

Satten.

Imprimis a satten lecterne to lay the Byble on—xij candelstycks—ij Basons and an old Ewer of peuter—an old shype for frankensence—ij hallowater pottes—a latten senses—ij handbells—a latten crosse and a latten pyx.

Lynnyn.

Imprimis vij auter clothes—iiij towels—ij curtens—a lawne clothe to carry y^e chrysmatory in—xj surplesses.

Bookes, etc.

Imprimis iij antyphones—ij grayles¹—iiij pressioners²—j hymnall³—j legand—ij masse books—one manuall,⁴ and a portas.⁵

An inventory of the goods remaining in the church on February 27, 1563, included the Communion cup, a Bible, two paraphases, a surplice, three psalm books, two diaper towels and one long towel, three tablecloths, two albes, “a clothe for the Communion Cuppe wherein yt ys wrapped,” together with four copes, eight vestments, “one subdeacon of bleue velvet lackyng of border,” “a canope clothe of Saten a brygges,” a curtain of dernyc, and four cushions.

Another inventory of 1573 is to much the same effect. The copes and vestments are all enumerated ; but an inventory of 1576, though mentioning the canopy (“full of holes”), and an albe, has no record of the copes and vestments. In an inventory of 1580 the albe and canopy are again recorded.

¹ The Grayle or Graduale contained the musical portions of the altar service.

² The Precessionale contained the litanies and anthems sung in procession.

³ The Hymnarium was the collection of hymns used in the different hour services.

⁴ The Manuall included all the numerous occasional services.

⁵ The Portiforium, Portas, or Breviarium, contained the hour services, which were reduced in our Prayer Book to mattins and evensong.

A more elaborate inventory of 1582 has the following interesting entry :

It^m those veye old and torne Tableclothes, of velvyth one is, and serveth to cover the fonte, and one hath red Crosses.

The albe and canopy again occur, and a new carpet of arras for "y^e comun boorde."

These Elizabethan inventories support the common-sense view of the "Vestment Controversy"—namely, that vestments were not prohibited ; but though understood to be sanctioned by the Ornaments Rubric, yet that their use gradually died out in almost all churches, partly from the great cost necessary for their maintenance, and partly from the growth of the Puritan spirit.¹ Most of the surviving copes and vestments were sold by the churchwardens, "by the consent of divers parishioners," together with the paraphernalia of the players, in 1576, when they realized the sum of £6 13s. 4d.

An inventory of 1621 mentions "a sheett of holland for offenders." The Commonwealth inventory of 1646 names the Bible, "a salme booke of the last Addition," the two volumes of Erasmus's *Paraphrases*, Jewell's works, silver gilt Communion cup with cover, another silver Communion cup "with a silver trencher," and two pewter flagons.

References to the penitent sheet kept ready for offenders occur occasionally down to about the close of the eighteenth century. The last time that we have noticed its use in the church of Chelmsford during a somewhat hasty survey of the archidiaconal court records, was in 1755, when there were two cases in which a spinster did penance for incontinence in the church during Sunday service, clad in a white sheet and holding a white wand in her hand. The penitent stood by the reading-desk until after the second lesson, when she knelt down, saying a form of confession after the minister, and asked the people to pray for her. It is satisfactory to know that in several Essex churches of about this date the male offenders were treated in a like manner.

¹ In the yearly inventories of All Saints', Derby, copes are mentioned down to 1567-68, and albes as late as 1576-77.

A certain amount of interest pertains to a table of sexton's fees of the year 1614 :

For a buriall wthout a coffyn in y^e churchyard, viij*d*.

Yf the p^{tie} be not above 12 yea^rse ould, then vj*d*.

The passing bell for any tollinge, iiij*d*.

& if he ringe out while he is travellinge, iiij*d*.

For a burial in the Churcheyarde wth a coffyn, ijs.

Yf the p^{tie} hathe not reseyved, xij*d*.

& if the p^{tie} hathe receyved & be buried in a Cofyn in y^e Churchyard, ijs.

& if the p^{tie} be buried in y Church, and in a coffyn, for ye grave, iijs. iv*d*.

For a duble knell, xx*d*.

The sexten's ffee q^rterly, & for the hearse, ij*d*.

In 1625 occurs the entry :

Payed unto Astine Brabrooke for a coffin to carry the dead of the plague to burieing, xijs.

It is not much more than a century ago that burials in coffins came into general use for the poorer classes. Every parish had its large coffin or open shell, which was placed on the bier ; the shrouded corpse was lifted out at the graveside. A few of these parish coffins still survive ; there is one in the room over the porch in the church of Hemingborough, Yorks.

There are several curious instances in this parish book of the various uses to which our churches were put even in post-Reformation times. The following entries refer to the storage within the walls of the harness or armour which the town was obliged to keep ready for arming the musters when summoned :

1557.—Item for half a hundred of nayles to hange on the harnes in the chamber on y^e vestrye, 2*d*.

1582.—Upon the vestrye chamber was bestowed and layde 28 corseletts of harneys and head pesys untill the chamber over the porch be prepared with glasyng and crosses to hang ye harneys on, etc.

Imprimis, to the goodman Drane of Wryttle for glasyng and repayryng all the 5 panes of glasse of the wyndowe over the porch on w^{ch} chamber the harness is bestowed for Chelmesford hundred, for newe glasse and amending y^e rest, viijs. iiij*d*.

The larger vestry on the north side of the church was actually used during the first half of the seventeenth

century for the storage of gunpowder and other ammunition. In 1607 an entry occurs of the payment of sixpence for "hoping the gunpowder barrells." In an inventory of 1615 mention is made of "One ould carpet lying in the Vestry over the gunpowder."

The following full entry occurs in the accounts of the year 1625 :

In the Vestrey Chambr.

The 3rd day of Septembr, 1625, was taken out of the chamber in the vestry of Chelmesford by vertue of a warrant from the Right Honorable the L: Maynard, Sr Francis Barrington, Knight Baronett, Sir John Drane, Knight, and Will^m Smythe, Esq^r, directed unto M^r Ambrose Aylett, one of the High Constables of the Hundreth of Chelmesforde, and carried unto Harwitch in Essex, viz. :

Tenn Barrells of Gunpowder.

Fower Barrells of Matches.

Fower Barrells of Bullets.

Left still remayning in the Chamber :

Eight barrells of gunpowder.

three barrells of bullets.

three barrells of matches.

One firkin of matches.

Two baggs of matches.

Two fardells of matches, the on lesser than the other.

It yet remains to make a brief reference to by far the most interesting of the former unusual contents of this church. The church goods included a great variety of dresses and other properties which were used for the representation of miracle plays.

Under the year 1652 occurs the following list :

Garmentes.

Fyrst iiij gownes of red velvet.

It^m a longe gowne of blew velvet.

It^m a short gowne of blew velvet.

It^m ij gownes of red satten.

It^m a gowne of borders.

It^m a gowne of clothe of tyssew.

It^m a jyrkyn of blew velvet wth sleeves.

It^m a jirkyn of borders without sleeves.

Itm. viij jyrkyns without sleeves.

Itm. ij vyces coats and ij skalpes, ij daggers.

It^m v prophets cappes.

It^m vj capes of furre and one of velvet.

It^m iij jyrkyns, iij sloppes for devils.

It^m iiij shepehokes, iiij whyppes.
 It^m a red gowne of sage.
 It^m xxiiij Bredes [beards] and xxj hares [wigs].
 It^m a fornēt of blew velvet with borders.
 It^m a mantell of red bawdekyn wth sleves.
 It^m iiij jeekes of red bawdekyn with sleves.

This list is followed by entries as to the payment of 20s. to the minstrels on two occasions, in addition to 10s. for a trumpeter, 3s. 4d. for a flute-player, and 5s. for a man "playeing on ye Drome." There were also further charges for their meat and drink. The plays were evidently committed to writing, for in 1562 one Christopher received 2s. for writing out seven parts. The cost of ironwork for making "the hell" was 4s. Amongst various other entries of this year, one Lawrence received 4d. "for watchinge in the Churchē when the Temple was a drying." This evidently refers to the drying of the paint on a part of the scenery. It is quite clear from various entries that the play was performed in the nave of the church on Sunday and on the following Monday. Watchers remained in the church on Sunday night to guard the scaffold. Mention is made of a third play during this year. Our Lord was evidently one of the characters, for John Wright received 16d. "for makynge a cotte of lether for Christe." Another man received 7s. for "payntenge the Jeiants and the pajeaunte and writtinge the plaiers names."

From various entries of the years 1563-76 it appears that the churchwardens of Chelmsford received a considerable addition to their income from letting out the players' garments for the use of other parishes. Thus in 1563 they received from the men of Colchester "for the here of our garments" 53s. 4d. on two different occasions; from Billericay 26s. 8d. and 20s.; from Walden, in Hertfordshire, for the hire of three gowns, 10s.; from Stratford, £3 6s. 8d.; from Little Baddow 26s. 8d., and from the children of Baddow 6s. 8d. In subsequent years substantial payments were received for the same reason from Boreham, Langham, Witham, Colchester, Brentwood, Writtle, and Hatfield. In 1570 the Earl of Sussex's players paid 26s. 8d. for the hire of the

players' garments of Chelmsford. Occasionally the Chelmsford players performed outside their own parish, particularly at Braintree and Maldon, and possibly the larger sums mentioned above included the hire and expenses of some of the actors as well as their properties.

We believe that the performance of miracle plays within a church was a very exceptional custom in Elizabethan days, and it is singular to find it so prevalent at Chelmsford and in this part of Essex. The last performance in Chelmsford church occurred in 1576, and from an entry of that year it would appear that there was probably some little disturbance. Eightpence was paid to one Drane "for mendinge of x broken holes in the church windowes which was done at the late playe."

The parish registers are for the most part in excellent order, especially throughout the sixteenth century.

Injunctions were issued by Thomas Cromwell, as Vicar-General, on September 5, 1538, to the effect that a book and a coffer with two locks should be provided for each parish, and the parson of the parish was ordered to write, every Sunday, in the presence of the churchwardens, or one of them, a record in the book of all the baptisms, marriages, and burials of the preceding week. In cases of neglect a fine of 3s: 4d. was imposed, to be applied to the repair of the church.

Chelmsford speedily set a good example of obedience to these injunctions. The first register book begins on September 13 of that year, the entries being made by "Rycharde Wolston, Curat ther undir Mr. William Tayte, Doctor and Parson of the same: Thomas Mild-maye and William Reynolde, Churchwardens."

A highly unusual note accompanies the first entry of the succeeding year, under the date of January 13, 1539. Mr. Wolston here writes: "Begynning at the first Daye of Januarye after the maner of the Astronymers and soe we truste to procede."

It may here be remarked that the year of the Christian era from early times began with March 25, that being the date assigned to the Annunciation or the "Incarnation of the Word." This system was long observed in most Christian countries. In England it was in full

legal use until 1751, after which date the year was reckoned from the first of January, according to Julian form. Mr. Wolston was evidently far in advance of his times.

Another interesting peculiarity of this register consists in the entering of the names of the godparents in the earlier pages in connexion with the baptismal records. Only a few instances of such a practice are extant.

Cardinal Pole, in 1555, required the names of the god-parents to be added in the baptismal registers, according to the practice of Italy and Spain, but this injunction seems to have been very rarely obeyed. It was only the rule of the Church of England during Queen Mary's reign ; but no such custom has ever been forbidden, and in a few cases was maintained for a long period. The custom of entering the god-parents' names was continued in the parish church of St. Nicholas, Newcastle-on-Tyne, up to the beginning of the last century.

An entry in these registers, about a century old, ought to be cited, as the memory of the tragedy it records still survives amongst the townsfolk. It runs as follows among the burials of 1804 :

"26 Oct. Thirteen Hanoverians, who were burned to death in the fire in the Spotted Dog in the backe Street, Chelmsford, names unknown." This is followed by the burial, on November 2, of another Hanoverian, of whom it is also said, "name unknown." A few particulars of this fatal disaster are given in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of that date. Chelmsford, being itself a garrison town and on the direct road from the port of Harwich to London, frequently formed a resting-place for moving troops. On this occasion 120 Hanoverians arrived unexpectedly ; they were quartered on the premises of the Spotted Dog, and most of them went to sleep amid straw in the stables. The fire broke out in the night—it is supposed through some of the soldiers smoking. When the alarm was given, owing to these foreigners misunderstanding the working of the latch of the door, many of them failed to escape. In the morning the burnt remains of thirteen of the number were dis-

covered, and another soldier died shortly afterwards from the injuries he had received. They were buried with full military honours.

THE BELLS.

There are various references to the bells of Chelmsford church—their renewal or repair—in the old book of churchwarden accounts. It must here suffice to cite the entry of 1592, when a rate was levied “for the reparacion of the Bells,” which amounted to 33s. 10d.

Morant, writing in 1768, states that the church “has a ring of six bells and a clock.” All these however, disappeared in 1777, when they gave way to a new ring of eight bells, each of which bears that date and the following respective inscriptions :

- (1) “ At proper times our voices we will raise
In sounding to our benefactors' praise.”
- (2) “ To honour both of God and king
Our voices shall in concert ring.”
- (3) “ Peace and good neighbourhood.”
- (4) “ Ye ringers all, that prize your health and happiness,
Be sober, merry, wise, and you'll the same possess.”
- (5) “ If you have a judicious ear
You'll own my voice is sweet and clear.”
- (6) “ Though much against us may we be said,
To speak for ourselves we are not afraid.”

On the seventh bell the founder abandoned doggrel, and was content to give the names of “Thos. Clapham, B. Clapham, and R. Shoobridge,” with the letters “Bes,” which seems to be a contraction for benefactors. The inscription on the great bell, or tenor, is more elaborate : “The Rev. George Morgan, rector ; Messrs. Geo. Simpson and John Ward and Matt. Joyce, Churchwardens.

“ In wedlock bands all ye who join,
With hands your hearts unite ;
So shall our tuneful tongues combine
To laud the nuptial rite.”

Mr. Chancellor states¹ that “about sixty years ago two other bells, which brought the ring up to ten, were

¹ *Transactions of Essex Archaeological Society* (1907), new series, x. 12.

transferred to the church of Moulsham (built in 1841), but that a few years since they were repurchased, and are now hung in their proper place."

There is only one other church in the county that has a ring of ten bells—namely, that of Prittlewell, which dates from 1887, when they were cast as a jubilee memorial to Queen Victoria.

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS.

The church of the Blessed Virgin of Chelmsford has been the recipient of much generosity at the hands of local benefactors and of the parishioners at large during the past half-century. The considerable sums devoted to its enlargement, maintenance, fittings, and decoration, have, on the whole, been spent with wisdom and good taste. The work accomplished during this period may be thus briefly summarized. In 1857 the west gallery was removed and the noble tower arch thrown open to the church. A new pulpit of various coloured marbles, with sculptured panels in white marble, was given in 1872 by the Right Hon. W. Hanbury. In 1873 the side galleries were taken down and a second north aisle was erected, of excellent workmanship, to provide the necessary accommodation. About the same time a north transept was built to furnish vestry and organ space. In 1878 the chancel was improved by the addition of a clerestory, and was otherwise restored. A brass plate on the south side states that "this chancel, rebuilt in 1878, is dedicated," etc. This statement is, however, too broadly worded for accuracy, for the arcades on the north and south sides, as well as other parts, are of fifteenth-century date. In 1884 there was a general rearrangement and refitting of the interior; in the same year the porch was restored by Mr. Chancellor at a cost of £400.

In 1899-1900 there were considerable alterations, including a good scheme of redecoration of the walls, and the church was seated throughout in oak, at a total cost of £3,500. A new organ was provided, built by Messrs. Norman and Beard. It is a fine instrument, with

2,614 pipes and 37 operating stops ; it was dedicated on St. Mark's Day by the Bishop of St. Albans. In 1904 the chancel was beautifully decorated, and £600 was spent over repairs of the tower in 1905.

The chief measurements of the ground plan of the church, exclusive of the second north aisle and the transept, are 120 feet in length by 54 feet in breadth. For the accompanying plan, showing possible extensions eastward and a chapter-house on the north side, we are greatly indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Chancellor.

THE RECTORS.

The following is a list of the rectors of Chelmsford, so far as we have been able to ascertain them. They are in the main taken from the *Repertorium* of Newcourt, who drew up his lists of incumbents of the London Diocese from the episcopal registers. A few have been supplied from other sources, such as Lambeth *sede vacante* registers, institution books at the Public Record Office, and the parish registers and accounts.

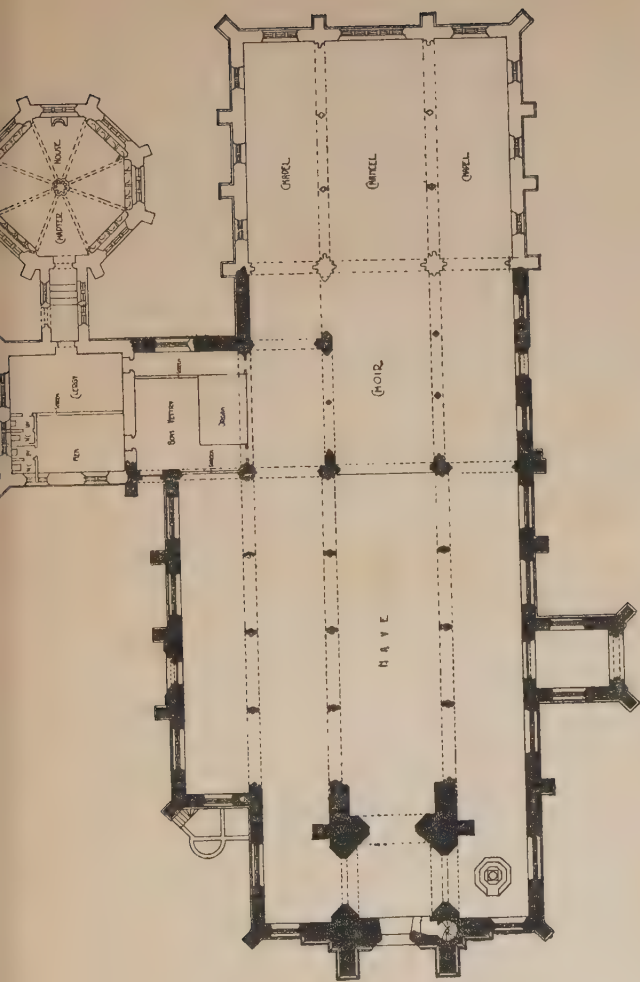
RECTORS OF CHELMSFORD.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1305. Thomas de Broncille. | 1547. Dr. Cole, sequestered
this year. |
| 1334. Richard Martin. | Dr. Crooke. |
| 1354. Walter de Merston. | 1559. Christopher Tatham. |
| 1361. John de Newport Pag-
nell. | 1560. William Ireland. |
| Thomas Tebaud. | 1570. Thomas Howlatt. |
| 1374. Thomas Baketon. | 1583. William Stone. |
| Oliver Elton. | 1585. George Burghley. |
| 1442. John Arundel. | 1594. Ralph Rowley. |
| 1456. John Wode. | 1604. William Pasfield. |
| William Poteman. | 1626. John Michaelson. |
| 1467. Christopher Banks. | [1644. Mark Mott. Interposed
during the Common-
wealth.] |
| 1474. Thomas Bower. | 1675. William Jackson. |
| 1475. William Ketill. | 1681. Nathaniel Gurdon. |
| 1485. Walter Knightley. | 1696. Michael Batt. |
| 1488. Thomas Lindley. | 1706. Oliver L. Pocklington. |
| 1492. John Hall. | 1738. John Tindall. |
| John Denby. | 1774. John Morgan. |
| 1502. Robert Wicks. | |
| 1522. William Tate, LL.D. | |

RECTORS OF CHELMSFORD—*continued.*

1788. John Morgan.	1878. John Cæsar Hawkins,
1818. John Gifford Ward. ¹	Bart.
1827. C. A. St. John Mildmay,	1880. Henry Frank Johnson,
Archdeacon.	Archdeacon.
	1895. Henry Ashton Lake.

¹ The evil of pluralities was of long continuance in the Church of England. Various rectors of Chelmsford held more than one benefice both in pre-Reformation and post-Reformation days. The power of dispensing to hold more than one benefice was transferred in the days of Henry VIII. from the Pope to the Archbishop of Canterbury. There are preserved at Lambeth fourteen large folio volumes containing these archiepiscopal dispensations. In the last volume is an entry, under the date June 20, 1825, to the effect that John Gifford Ward, M.A., of New College, chaplain to the Earl of Cornwall, holding the rectory of Chelmsford, of the yearly value of £400, had been collated to the church of St. James, Westminster, of the reputed yearly value of £800. He applied for dispensation to hold both preferments, and it was granted, "Chelmsford being not more than thirty miles distant from Westminster!"



Scale of 1/4" = 1 foot

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